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Lives Given to Freedom

Dedications to Communist Fighters

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CONTENTS

	Page
Immortal Soldiers of Freedom (In lieu of a preface)	7
Algeria	
They Fell in the Fight for Algeria s Freedom	19
Kaddour Belkaim	29
Tahar Ghomri	39
Mohammed Guerrouf	43
Laid Lamrani	47
Bouali Taleb	51
Belgium	
Julien Lahaut	57
Chile	
Galo Gonzalez Dias	77
France	
Marcel Cachin	97
Germany	
Ernst Thaelmann	123
Greece	
Nikos Belojanis	157
Guatemala	
Octavio Reyes Ortiz	183
India	
Ajoy Kumar Ghosh	199
Indonesia	
Manovar Musso	221
Indonesia	
Amir Sjarifuddin	245
Iran	
Taqi Erani	265

Iran
Khosrov Rouzbeh 283

Iraq
Fahid 307

Iraq
Salaam Adel 337

Italy
Giuseppe Di Vittorio 355

Japan
Sen Katayama 381

Japan
Shoichi Ichikawa 407

Japan
Kyuichi Tokuda 425

Lebanon
Farajallah Helu 447

Mexico
Ruben Jaramillo 479

Morocco
Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah 495

Paraguay
Wilfrido Alvarez 513

The Philippines
Mariano Balgos 525

The Philippines
Crisanto Evangelista 535

The Philippines
Juan Feleo 545

Portugal
Bento Gonsalves 553

Spain
Julian Grimau Garcia 573

Turkey
Mustafa Suphi 595

Venezuela
Jose Gregorio Rodriguez 613

Immortal Soldiers of Freedom

(In lieu of a preface)

exorable in its swift flight Time nevertheless leaves behind countless monuments helping us to reconstruct the centuries long dramatic struggle of the working people for their freedom Thousands of heroes whose dream of liberation has roused slave against master have sacrificed their lives at the altar of the people's happiness History has kept their names fresh in our minds, folklore has preserved their image in the poetic legend of Danko, retold by the great proletarian writer Maxim Gorky

Danko gave all the fire of his young heart to light the way for the people and show them where their happiness lay Yet even his exploit pales beside that of the men and women who in our own times have continued the fight against exploitation, and given their lives for freedom

The secret police of the fascist inquisitor Franco guard the unsung grave of a man whose features are familiar to people the world over He has looked out at his fellow men with kind, weary eyes from the pages of countless newspapers He is among those who gave their lives for the eternal spring time of the human race 'Dead, Julian Grimau has become an emblem of struggle He is still among us, he lives and will continue to live in the hearts of future generations as

they march to communism they will fight like Julian Grimau fought, like many thousands of heroes who fell in the struggle, but fell unvanquished "

These moving words were spoken by his distinguished countrywoman, Dolores Ibarruri, on the day of Julian Grimau's execution They express deep affection, grief and pride in a fellow Party member and could well serve as the epigraph of this book about the Communists, dauntless far-seeing sons of the peoples of Europe and Asia, Africa and America, who gave their lives for peace and socialism For their contemporaries and generations to come their lives will ever be shining examples of supreme devotion to the ideas of communism and the cause of the revolution They have attained immortality

"To devote myself to the revolution and communism, such is the meaning of my life If I cannot work for the cause of communism, I do not want to live," said the Japanese communist leader Sen Katayama

The whole life of Ruben Jaramillo, fearless communist leader of the Mexican peasantry, illustrates the motto 'I is better to die standing than to live on one's knees " He was killed by hired assassins, who did not even spare his wife and three sons

Communists know that their struggle is fraught with grave trials, even death The Paraguayan popular hero, Wilfrido Alvares, helped his comrades elude their pursuers by exposing himself to the gun fire of the bloody dictator's police hounds His body was riddled with bullets, yet he found the strength to write "Long live communism!" in his own blood on a house wall Wilfrido Alvares, a prominent leader of the Paraguayan communist movement, died before reaching the age of forty "He died the death of a Communist, fighting against the enemy to his last breath," said the Manifesto issued by the Communist Party of Paraguay in honour of its heroic son

Freedom had another gallant soldier in the immortal

Marcel Cachin, often called the heir of the Paris communards He was the first emissary of the French working class to the young Soviet Republic The French proletariat's spokesman wanted to see the new land where there were no masters or slaves at first hand

Marcel Cachin visited many cities, towns and villages in revolutionary Russia, spoke to workers, peasants and Red Army men, and saw what great exploits a free people can perform for the sake of a better future His admiration for the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses strengthened into the belief that the road taken by the Communists of the Soviet Union was a correct one His memorable meetings with Lenin further convinced him of the importance of the October Revolution He told his fellow revolutionaries on his return to his own country 'That victorious historic movement will have far reaching and decisive repercussions in France, Europe and the whole world "

Marcel Cachin lived to see his prophecy come true The world socialist system was born and grew from strength to strength before his eyes

The thunderous reverberations of the October Revolution awakened the revolutionary spirit of the peoples in the colonies and semi colonies Lenin stressed the inseverable historical link between the workers' longing for socialism and that of 'imperialism's coloured slaves" for emancipation And time has corroborated his foresight

In Europe and Asia, Africa and Latin America there have matured latent forces capable of breaking the imperialist and colonialist chains of present day slavery

The injured national pride of the patriots of the oppressed countries, their hatred for both their home grown and their foreign oppressors have found an outlet in revolutionary action They have taken the ideas and revolutionary experience of the Party of Lenin as their guide

The world remembers the attack on the Moncado army barracks in Santiago de Cuba on the 26th of July, 1953,

when a handful of young men better armed with hatred for the oppressors than with rifles hurled themselves against the guns and bayonets of thousands of soldiers In the unequal combat the young heroes were bled white by the enemy's merciless fire Those who were killed found an eternal resting place in their native soil The survivors were brought to trial A volume of Lenin s writings was discovered on the person of one of them When the judge asked him to whom the book belonged he replied It belongs to us anyone who does not read such books is ignorant!

The date of the Moncado attack has gone down in history as the beginning of the Cuban revolution and the young man who made that defiant reply Fidel Castro became its leader After the defeat of the hirelings of American imperialism he told the world We were increasingly convinced of the truth of the ideas of Marx and Engels and of the truly inspired exposition of scientific socialism presented by Lenin

The class consciousness of the many revolutionaries you read about in this book matured in struggle They armed themselves with unerring knowledge of the historical laws of social development They believed in the inevitable advent of the new era of freedom and equality, and, defying death, they sped Time on

Thousands of revolutionaries in Europe, Asia, Africa and America looked to the leader of the Russian working class as their model of supreme devotion to the great cause of the Party, from him they learned to relate the people s natural desire for a better life to the scientific theory of communism On his advice they took their rightful places in the front ranks of the national liberation movement

Marching at the head of demonstrations, storming the invaders' strong points fighting for the emancipation of their native lands from foreign oppression, evading pursuers, undergoing torture—wherever they were they led the mighty popular onslaught which has demolished the recently still impregnable bastion of colonialism

Never before has the family of independent nations of the world been as large as it is now. Still, the work of liberating the oppressed peoples is not finished. The young states have still to consolidate the freedom they have won, lay a dependable economic base, do away with the dire legacy of colonialism, and defeat the imperialists' attempts to shackle them with the chains of neo-colonialism.

The Communists of the Soviet Union, true to Lenin's precepts, are faithfully performing their internationalist duty and giving unselfish help to the nations struggling against imperialism. It would have gone hard with proud freedom-loving Cuba but for the existence of the land of Soviets and other socialist countries on the opposite side of the globe. Every time the Island of Freedom was threatened with aggression, a strong hand of friendship staved off the danger to the Cuban revolution. "The friendship of the Soviet Union and Cuba," Fidel Castro has said, "is a striking example of relations between countries based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. We are receiving invaluable, practically unlimited aid from the Soviet Union and all the other socialist countries, with the result that the attempts to throttle our revolution by means of economic blockade and famine have completely failed." And so that young republic is successfully building a new life such as has never been seen before under the sun in South, Central or North America.

As Ajoy Ghosh pointed out, "Every step that takes the USSR towards communism, also enhances its capacity to defeat imperialist efforts to export counter-revolution and to render aid and assistance to countries which have thrown off the foreign yoke and are striving to rebuild their economy. The advance of the USSR along the path of communism simultaneously strengthens the cause of national independence in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America." Relying on Soviet support, Egypt defended its independence and economic interests, West Irian was reincorporated in

Indonesia Goa, Diu and Daman were reunited with the Indian peoples and Cambodia retained its sovereignty The Soviet people's energetic and decisive assistance has been warmly acknowledged by the patriots of Algeria and the young Republic of Yemen

These are times of remarkable accomplishments and the most wonderful of them are performed by Communists Communists are the pioneers of space travel They are spurring on the masses engaged in communist construction They form the staunchest revolutionary cohort of the nations fighting for freedom They are the most fervent champions of world peace If at times they have had recourse to arms, it is only because their class foes have compelled them to resort to that method of upholding their ideals We feel that we have fully demonstrated the above and before this meeting of representatives of the workers and peasants of all Russia, before all the multi millioned masses of Russian workers and peasants we declare that we shall do everything in our power to maintain the peace of the future ' That pronouncement of Lenin's is still considered a sacred pledge

Since then, Communists all over the world have continued their relentless struggle to keep trenches from defacing the globe, and the whine of bullets and shells from offending the ears of its inhabitants

Ernst Thaelmann was passionately opposed to predatory wars There are people alive today who remember the anti-war meetings between the workers of Germany and their brothers in France, Denmark, Holland and Poland, organised by the leader of the German proletariat on the border of his country It was at his suggestion that, on the eve of the fascists seizure of power, a conference was called in Essen where representatives of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League adopted a manifesto urging the West-European working class to unite and fight the unbridled rampage of the fascist thugs His militant slogan, "Whoever wants peace must fight for it", was on all lips at that time

V I Lenin warned that the use of great technical and scientific discoveries for the wholesale annihilation of millions of human beings and conversion of all productive forces to military ends would inevitably undermine the very conditions of the existence of human society"

Like true Leninists, Communists have kept their fingers on the pulse of the times Alert to the menace of the atomic bomb to the human race, they have rallied selflessly to the defence of the planet and everything that lives and breathes from that mortal danger They have made the fight for peace their victorious battle standard

After a long struggle the international proletariat and peace loving forces of the world communist movement gained a great victory—the signing in Moscow of the nuclear test ban treaty in the air in outer space and under water For the first time in the many cloudy years of the cold war, East and West agreed on an issue that vitally concerns people everywhere

But the fight is not over While the silent shades of those who perished in the atomic holocaust at Hiroshima and Nagasaki still cry out for humanity, bombs again lacerate the bleeding soil of Viet Nam, and women, old men and children are again dying in the poisonous vapours of gas bombs Communists are alerting the peoples to uphold the just cause of Viet Nam s patriots All honest men and women on earth are joined by the desire to stop the American aggres sors They will never forget that blot on history, the use of atom bombs and poison gases against mankind

Marxist Leninists regard human life as the greatest treasure on earth For the sake of a life worthy of man, they are building communism, the most just and humane society For the sake of life, the Communists of whom this book tells went to their deaths For the sake of life, Communists fight for peace Peaceful coexistence is predicated by the whole course of the development of human society The principle of peaceful coexistence between countries with different so

cial systems, if understood in the Leninist sense, by no means implies reconciliation with imperialism, or a relaxation of the revolutionary struggle, or the discontinuation of the national liberation movement On the contrary, recent developments have definitely shown that pursuance of the policy of peaceful coexistence has advanced the class struggle of the proletariat and the fight of the oppressed peoples for their emancipation The peoples of the socialist countries are winning out over capitalism in the peaceful economic competition of the two systems Way back in 1928 Ernst Thaelmann reiterated an idea expressed earlier by Lenin when he said that every big new success on the economic front (for the Soviet Union—*Ed*) confronts the working class of the whole world with further proof of the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system That historically decisive issue will in the last analysis determine the outcome of the struggle between us and the bourgeoisie

Genuine revolutionaries see the key to a bright future for mankind in the continued identification of all socialist forces, the revolutionary energy of the proletariat in the imperialist countries and of the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples with the movement for universal peace

Time flies, and everything grows old But the idea of communism remains eternally young It develops and is continually rejuvenated by the fresh, vital sap it draws from practical revolutionary struggle No other movement in history has had such irrepressible impact on society as communism

Sixty years ago, at the dawn of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the great Lenin said "We are going in a close little group, firmly holding hands, along a dangerous and hard road We are surrounded on all sides by enemies and have to go practically the whole way under their fire"

Today under the revolutionary banner of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the entire multi national Soviet people are building the edifice of communism

In the lifetime of a single generation one third of mankind has thrown off the chains of capitalism and embarked on the construction of a society of Equality Fraternity and Happiness

This historical accomplishment has filled Communists on all the continents with confidence in the inevitable collapse of the old world There have been times when they have had to face up to numerically superior and stronger enemies ready to snuff out their lives But even after death they have remained in the united fraternal ranks and the work begun by them has been finished by others

To be a soldier of the revolution ' said Ernst Thaelmann ' is to retain unswerving loyalty to the cause, the kind of loyalty that can stand the test of life and death Only if we are steadfast and dependable of character and believe in our victory can we change our destiny and do our revolutionary duty in fulfilment of the great historical mission which devolves upon us and so ensure the ultimate victory of real socialism "

Ernst Thaelmann died as a result of the tortures to which he was subjected in fascist prisons But his dream of a socialist Germany has come to life in the German Democratic Republic Nikos Belojanis member of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party, was killed but the democratic forces of modern Hellas are not dead Animal fear for his own person and his prison regime induced Franco to take the life of the ardent revolutionary Julian Grimau, but the Communist Party of Spain is alive and functioning

The Lebanese Communist Farajalla Helu is no longer in the revolutionary ranks The Japanese Communist Party has lost Sen Katayama, Shoichi Ichikawa and Kyuichi Tokuda Imperialist hirelings perpetrated the foul murder of Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah, Moroccan communist leader Mustafa

Suphi, one of the founders of the Turkish Communist Party was brutally done to death by the reactionaries

Communists and all other honest men and women with them bare their heads before the radiant memory of the soldiers of the freedom army who laid down their lives to defeat the common foe Their exploits and struggle live on in the great victory of the world communist movement in the fighters they trained, in the lives of their ideological and political followers

Khosrov Rouzbeh, gallant son of the Iranian people, said just before his untimely death "If the senators use their powers to put my death sentence into effect, nothing serious will happen Khosrov Rouzbeh will be executed But his ideas will be correctly assessed, and that to him means eternal life "

Only a man with a keen sense of the continuity of past present and future, a man who believed in the great depth and creative powers of the human mind, could voice such thoughts

People like Khosrov Rouzbeh transformed even their death into an ardent defence of the lofty ideals of communism

And how honest, unselfish and sincere they were in their relations with their near ones!

Not so long ago there walked under the burning sun of Iraq a man who was a most ardent patriot of his country His name is Salaam Adel Nor is it much longer since he penned the following open hearted and warm, and yet brutally frank lines to the woman who was to become his wife and who is now his widow "Once again before we marry I want to remind you that I have no means, no property, no high diploma, no job guaranteed in any way I say honestly that I am utterly penniless, that I come from an ordinary working class family, which is however of honest repute and good name, and that I own nothing but the Party title of a Communist who is fighting for a better future for mankind

That is the sacred cause to which I have dedicated my life, and in asking you to become my wife it is my duty to tell you, as I have told you before, that my life does not belong to me alone As with all honest fighters in my country, the constant threat of danger arrest and torture stalks my footsteps But I can definitely and honestly promise you as much as is in my power—that you shall have a life that is pure, a life where there is no place for the evil or filth in which our class enemies wallow

In the light of the growing responsibility for the fate of the people that rests on Communists with each new historical advance the problem of strengthening the unity of the communist and working class movement both on a national and an international scale takes on the highest importance

Capital is an international force Its defeat requires an international alliance of the workers their internatio nal brotherhood,' said V I Lenin The great slogan raised by Marx and Engels, 'Workers of all lands unite!', reformulated during Lenin's lifetime and with his approval to read Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples unite!"

that slogan is rallying and inspiring the working people to fight for the victory of the great ideals of humanity Proletarian solidarity is the mighty weapon of the working class in the fight against the enemies of communism That weapon was forged by the efforts of many generations of Communists

Marcel Cachin, Ernst Thaelmann, Nikos Belojanis, Julian Grimau and thousands of other heroic sons of our age worked for unity died for it, saw in it the most reliable key to freedom and enlightenment They are no longer in our midst, but their self sacrificing struggle for the unity of all the workers of the earth, wherever they were born, on the banks of the Seine or the Congo, the Amazon or the Ganges, is a fitting reproach to those who are trying to split the forces of the working people on the grounds of different colour of skin

The Communists of whom this book tells embody the finest qualities of the Leninist type of revolutionary Every one of them grew to strength and maturity in the fire of bitter class battles They had more than to be of revoluti onary temperament, they also had to wield the weapon of revolutionary theory And more than that, they had to de velop a staunch and irreconcilable spirit Indeed, the struggle demanded even more—that they not only know what to do, but also find in themselves the strength to do what furthered the interests of the toiling masses They fell in unequal bat tle, but the ranks of the heroes did not grow thin By the inexorable logic of historical development, each new day has replenished the numbers of the young fighters who are chasing ignorance and violence from the globe

Addressing himself to these fighters, in words true of those who gave their lives for the people, Nazim Hikmet said "Wherever you may be on Red Square, among the banners and songs, or in prison behind iron bars, whether you are waiting at the door of a maternity home for your wife to come out with your infant in her arms, or are lan guishing in a prison cell under threat of execution—if you have worked as a Communist, thought as a Communist, loved as a Communist, fought as a Communist and lived as a Communist, you are the luckiest man of the 20th century

May the life and struggle of the immortal soldiers of freedom remain a shining example to the young Communists of the world

They Fell in the Fight for Algeria's Freedom

Algerian Communists fought bravely at the side of all the patriots of Algeria for the freedom and happiness of their people They helped to unite the revolutionary anti imperialist forces of the nation in the fight against the colonialists and for a new independent Algeria

(From the greetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Algeria on the occasion of the proclamation of Algerian independence)

he recent history of Algeria is a record of relentless struggle by the Algerian people for their liberty and national independence One hundred and thirty two years of French colonial rule dislocated the whole life of their country Its best lands were seized by the colonialists, they controlled its industries French monopolies and banks penetrated into all branches of the economy The brutally exploited Algerian people eked out a beggarly existence Over and above this economic exploitation and pauperisation, the Algerians also had to put up with national and racial discrimination

They were made to feel like strangers in their own land Shortly after the conquest of Algeria the French king proclaimed the country a French domain whose Arab population belonged to an inferior uneducatable race fit only to serve the colonial settlers as farm hands masons and cobblers '

In that French domain , the indigenous inhabitants denied all political rights, had to submit to a special legal code 'for natives" Their fate hung on the whims of the French colonial authorities, without whose sanction they could not even move about freely on the territory of their own land

The least attempt they made to defend their rights was brutally suppressed And yet their struggle against colonial rule did not subside for a day It had its ups and downs, now flaring up, now only smouldering and it reached unprecedented scope after the Great October Socialist Revolution, when patriotic organisations committed to the goal of national independence sprang up all over the country

In 1920, the Communists formed their first organisations After 1936, with the victory of the Popular Front in France, the Communist Party of Algeria attained organisational cohesion, and was allowed to function legally

The Communist Party proved to be the most zealous champion of the people s rights It led the struggle for social reforms against racial discrimination and political disfranchisement One of the main goals it espoused was the achievement of national independence

The defeat of fascism in the Second World War and establishment of the world socialist system further stimulated the growth of the national liberation movement

The statement of the November 1960 meeting of representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties points out that "the existence of the world socialist system and weakening of imperialism's positions opened up new opportunities for the oppressed peoples to gain independence"

By the end of the Second World War, the influence of the Algerian Communist Party soared Its membership in 1945 was triple that of 1939 The newspaper *Liberte* organ of the Central Committee of the C P A , was printed in 115,000 co pies and had 25 000 subscribers

Members of the Party carried its message to the Algerian toilers instilling a spirit of indomitable resistance to the colonialists and gradually preparing the people for the com ing battles for their freedom and independence

The high water mark of the Algerian liberation movement was the November 1954 uprising which developed into a people s war of many years duration against the French colonialists and ended in March 1962 with the signing of the Evian Agreements The Algerian Communist Party took a prominent part in this struggle and the work that led up to it

Throughout the period of preparation for the 1954 armed uprising, the Communist Party of Algeria did much to acti vate the national liberation movement It wielded great in fluence on the masses and led many of their anti colonial acts Conducting a sweeping political campaign among the workers and peasants it helped to build up their organisa tional unity and militancy The people recognised it as the true champion of their interests and placed their trust in it In the 1950 municipal elections and 1951 elections to Parliament, the Communist Party of Algeria polled more votes in many towns and rural centres than any other national party

In view of certain objective historical conditions, the armed resistance started by the people in 1954 was led by the political organisation known as the National Liberation Front (FLN) The Communist Party immediately proclaimed the justice of the uprising and instructed its members in the embattled areas to join up with the guerillas and support the fight against the colonialists in every way It made the most of its limited legal possibilities during the first year of the uprising to win the wide political and practical support

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of the masses for the guerillas The effectivity of its work along those lines was reflected in the epidemic of strikes that broke out in the urban centres of the country

The armed uprising of November 1954 was the logical culmination of the political work accomplished in the prece ding years Because of that political work, the Algerian people immediately came to the aid of the insurgents and participated actively in the anti colonial war which soon enveloped the whole country The regular troops, or *moud-jahiddines*, were joined by the *mousseblines*, or volunteers from the villages and towns in the fighting areas As soon as a local operation was completed, the *mousseblines* went back to their peaceful pursuits That enabled the numerically small detachments of Algerian patriots using guerilla tactics to deal the French army sudden and telling blows

Obstacles were put in the way of the Communists joining up with the guerillas For one, the FLN leaders refused to accept Communists in the detachments on a par with other Algerian patriots Those accepted underwent every manner of restriction and discrimination The FLN leadership even demanded the dissolution of the Algerian Communist Party, they wanted the Party members who were admitted to its ranks to renounce their ideals and political convictions

For months the Communist Party tried to straighten out these difficulties with the FLN leadership and give its memb ers a chance to do their bit in the fight But the FLN spurn ed the Party's constructive proposals

Under the circumstances, the Central Committee of the C P A decided to set up its own communist military orga nisation, known as the "Liberation Fighters" That organi sation, formed in 1955, launched active military operations against the colonialists' army concurrently with the hosti-lities conducted by the FLN

Meanwhile the Communist Party pressed its efforts to unite all the forces of the nation committed to the goal of national liberation Ever since its formation in October

Algerian patriots demand independence

1936, it had insisted that the national liberation of Alge ria was the concern not of any one class or one party, but of all the national and democratic forces of the country without exception Its efforts were not wasted At the end of April and beginning of May 1956, contact was at last established between the leaders of the C P A and FLN, and negotia tions started In June 1956, the sides came to an agreement on the conditions of their cooperation and participation by the Communists in the war By the agreement, the communist "Liberation Fighters" units were transferred to the command of the National Liberation Army controlled by the FLN In addition, the Communists joining the ranks of the Na tional Liberation Army promised, while retaining their own political views, not to maintain organisational or political

A demonstration for national independence in December 1960 is dispersed

ties with the Communist Party until the end of the war

Guided by the same striving for unity, the C P A urged Communists and sympathisers affiliated with the General Union of Algerian Workers to join the Algerian General Confederation of Labour As a result of that move, the solidarity of the trade union movement was assured and the unification of the nation as a whole in its fight for liberty and national independence was promoted

In September 1955, the C P A was banned The leaders of the C P A were subjected to brutal reprisals by the colonial authorities Eight of the twelve members of the Political Bureau of its Central Committee were arrested and thrown into prisons and concentration camps But the remaining leaders of the Par-

ty, headed by Bachir Hadj Ali, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee, did not leave the country They stayed on and continued to direct the work of the Communists all over the country Besides participating in the actual fighting, Communists also conducted educational and political work among the soldiers of the National-Liberation Army, the population, the trade unions and other organisations Publication of the C P A newspaper *Liberte* as well as many brochures and leaflets continued clandestinely In 1957, the Party began to bring out the theoretical journal *Realites Algeriennes et Marxisme* and the periodical *Al-Djazair al-Moudjahida*

The Algerian Communists fighting in the ranks of the National Liberation Army at the side of all the patriots of the country wrote a glorious chapter in the history of the people s heroic struggle against the French colonialists, for the happiness and independence of their homeland But the sides were too unevenly matched, and Algeria's patriotic forces, outnumbered as they were by the enemy, sustained heavy losses The numerically superior and well drilled French colonial army, abundantly supplied with the most modern weapons, was thrown against units of the National-Liberation Army that had been formed during the fighting with no other equipment than light infantry guns In March 1955, the manpower of the French Army in Algeria reached 200,000, in the summer of 1956, it was up to 400,000 In the autumn of 1958, France had 800,000 officiers and men, two-thirds of its Air Force, and half of its Navy in Alge ria

In addition, other countries belonging to the aggressive NATO bloc, and especially the USA, Federal Germany, Britain and Italy came actively to France's help in its dirty war against the Algerian people

Thus the Algerian people, on taking the road of armed struggle for their freedom, found pitched against them the joint forces of a whole coalition of imperialist powers Only

boundless courage and faith in the justice of their cause, plus the help of the socialist countries and all the progressive forces of the world, enabled the Algerians to win their fight against the colonialists It was a victory achieved at the price of incredible suffering and sacrifice

Many Algerian Communists met their death during the armed uprising and the period preceding hostilities They died for the happiness and bright future of their people

Among those martyred were Kaddour Belkaim, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Algeria, who was murdered by the French colonialists while serving a prison term, and the Central Committee members Bouali Taleb, Mohammed Guerrouf, Laid Lamrani and Tahar Ghomri, who died the death of the brave on the field of battle against the colonialists' army

Kaddour Belkaim

Kaddour Belkaim

The life and work of Kaddour Belkaim, one of the founders and leaders of the Algerian Communist Party, were wholly dedicated to the Algerian people Born in 1908 into a poor working class family in Oran, his childhood years were clouded by the oppressive conditions of French colonial rule

The very year Kaddour Belkaim was born, the European colonisers of Algeria held a congress at which they demanded that elementary education of the native population be discontinued Their argument was that the spread of education among the indigenous population would 'endanger the economy and jeopardise the interests of the French residents "

Their demand was heeded by the French colonial authorities, and it was seldom indeed that Algerian children were allowed to go to school Even those who had the rare luck of attending school received instruction in French, while their native Arabic was taught as a foreign language

Such were the conditions that shaped the destinies of little Kaddour Though highly gifted and eager to study he could not even hope to enter secondary school No sooner had he learned to read and write, than he was obliged, still a child to go to work and help his parents make ends meet After doing odd jobs and running errands, he was engaged at the age of twelve or thirteen as a butcher's boy, and toiled from dawn to dark for a miserable wage

The rumble of the October Revolution in Russia was heard in Algeria, stimulating the national liberation struggle and awakening the class consciousness of Algerian workers

In 1926, the Algerian workers who had emigrated to France formed their first political organisation, the North African Star (Etoile Nord Africaine) One of its moving spirits was the Communist Guerrouf Mohammed, who was later to become a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Algeria Several years after its foundation,

the North African Star raised the demand for the independence of Algeria

In 1931, representatives of the Muslim intelligentsia, who had been educated at the universities of Tunis and Cairo, set up the Union of Ulama Reformers The Ulama stood for the revival of Islam and preservation of the Arab language and culture They were extremely active in the cultural sphere, founded schools where teaching was conducted in modern Arabic, and, of course, took part in the fight against colonial oppression

The Algerian working class was intensifying its struggle A wave of strikes to win better conditions for the toilers swept the country Young Belkaim did not keep aloof from these developments He participated actively in the Algerian workers' fight for their rights, for the emancipation of his country from French colonial rule

Until 1936, the year of the victory of the Popular Front in France, even trade unions were banned in Algeria, let alone political parties Six months' jail was the penalty for joining a trade union Algerian trade unions nevertheless continued to function illegally until 1936, and early in the thirties Kaddour Belkaim joined one of the underground unions At about that time, too, he became a member of the Young Communist League Thus began his class conscious participation in the struggle of the Algerian working class as an active champion of the working man's rights and the emancipation of his native land But before he could be really useful, he had to study and learn a great deal

The Young Communist organisations, with their biggest centres in the cities of Algeria, Oran, Constantine, Blida, Tlemcen and Bône, engaged in broad propaganda among the youth, campaigned for solidarity with the victims of colonialist repression and helped the families of arrested Communists

In 1934, at the age of 26, Kaddour Belkaim joined an underground Communist Party organisation in Oran

By that time the Communist Party had branches in all the large cities of Algeria and even in some of the villages and douars

The thirties saw the Communists engaged in important work among the peasants and agricultural, building and mining workers with the aim of stimulating the struggle for their rights, for better living conditions, for freedom of religious worship and the right to education Many Communists were arrested in 1934 and exiled to the south, where they were incarcerated in the Beni Abbas camp, lost in the Sahara Desert

These brutal measures did not frighten the young Communist, Kaddour Belkaim He did his best to fill the place of the comrades who had been torn from the struggle, take over their work, and keep up the influence of the Communists on the wide masses of working people

The colons who had a big say in French colonial policy were anxious to find ways of retaining their interests in Algeria They saw the answer in establishing a fascist regime in the country In 1934, they began to extend financial support to fascist organisations and give wide publicity to the activity of Mussolini and Hitler

Algerian Communists bent every effort to prevent the spread of fascism in their country Kaddour Belkaim also threw himself ardently into that work He began to give more of his time and energy to Party activities, soon gained the respect of his fellow Communists, and was made the secretary of the Oran branch of the Party

At the end of 1935, he was elected to the Oran Department Party Bureau From then on he devoted himself entirely to Party work as a professional revolutionary He kept in close touch with the working people, looked into their needs, and fought for the betterment of their material conditions

Kaddour Belkaim's role in organising the struggle of the Algerian working people and developing the anti imperialist and national-liberation movement was outstanding

Convinced that unity of the forces of the nation was essential to the success of the fight against colonialism he promoted the movement for the alliance of all patriotic elements

In June 1936, representatives of the C P A , the Union of Ulama Reformers, the North African Star and other national organisations held a Muslim Congress, which subsequently became a permanent body The Muslim Congress called for broader democratic rights for Algerians, independence of the Muslim faith from colonial administration and equal wages for Algerians and Europeans Huge demonstrations took place in support of these demands, and representative delegations were sent to Paris

The convocation of the Muslim Congress coincided with the victory of the Popular Front in France an event that fired the hopes of the Algerian masses for with it came the opportunity for them to openly set up their own political parties and organisations

Simultaneously with the amalgamation of the national parties and organisations of Algeria in the Muslim Congress progressive Europeans living in Algeria organised National Front committees

Belkaim worked for unity of action of the Muslim Congress and aforesaid National Front committees whose joint efforts would intensify the struggle against the fascist leagues and for democratic reforms in his country

To gain the support of young Algerians, Kaddour Belkaim Lamine Lamodi, director of the independent newspaper *La Defence*, and Hammoud Hammouda secretary general of the unions of ex republican soldiers, founded a youth branch of the Muslim Congress The differences of opinion existing in the Congress, however, prevented the adoption of a genuine national programme, and the Muslim Congress plus its youth branch, debilitated by internal contradictions, came to an untimely end

Kaddour Belkaim did much to win the masses over to the side of the Communists He worked hard to that end, clarify

ing the Communists' platform on various aspects of the anti colonial struggle for the independence of the country, on the fight for the rights of the working people and for satisfaction of the demands of the workers and peasants He explained the ultimate goal of the Communists to be the building of the most democratic and progressive form of society—communism The educational work he and his fellow Communists did among the wide masses bore fruit The people gave their trust and support to the Communists A great many votes were cast for Algerian Communists in the 1936 elections of municipal councilmen They scored a big victory in Algiers, where El Hadj Amara Fertehoukh, one of the local communist leaders was elected a councilman

The role played by the Communists was so important that it had to be acknowledged even by the leaders of the national bourgeoisie

Besides gaining many supporters among the urban proletariat, Algerian Communists also activated their work in the villages during this period They organised rural unions of farm workers whose struggle for better living conditions they directed and encouraged Kaddour Belkaim also gave much of his time to this work In 1936, a wave of strikes swept the country The farm workers came out with the dockers metal and building workers for improvements in their living conditions the right to strike, recognition of the workers' representatives, the eight hour day and paid vacations In some villages, they took over the farms of the French colons

During the class battles of 1936 and 1937, Kaddour Belkaim s strong helping hand was felt by the other prominent Algerian Communists working directly in the leadership of the trade unions, among them Maarouf Mohammed, secretary of the General Confederation of Labour, and Si El Hadj Mohammed Ennafaa, secretary general of the Dockers' Union

In 1936 Kaddour Belkaim visited the first socialist country of the world, the USSR, as a delegate from the Society

of Friends of the Soviet Union Interested in the life and achievements of the Soviet people, he was above all eager to learn how the nationalities of the Central Asian republics, formerly oppressed under the tsarist autocracy, were faring under Soviet government, and he toured those republics On his return to his own country, he spoke with admiration of the gains the Soviet people had made in so short a time He published a series of articles on the achievements of the Central Asian republics of the USSR in the *La lutte sociale*, the Algerian Communist Party newspaper

After his visit to the Soviet Union, he threw himself even more energetically into the struggle for the rights of the working class and the independence of his homeland

In October 1936, the Communists of Algeria held their First Constituent Congress, and Kaddour Belkaim was elected a member of the Central Committee of the C P A He was put in charge of the work of a number of Party units in the de partment of Oran

At the Second Congress of the C P A in December 1937, Kaddour Belkaim was elected a member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Comittee of the Party, and made responsible for Party organisational problems From then on his activities were concentrated for the most in the city of Algiers, although his duties often took him to other parts, for instance Oran and Constantine During those trips he had long talks with the local comrades on organisa tional and political questions His self dedication and tire lessness in the struggle for the interests of the working class won him the respect and trust of his fellow Party members and of the Algerian working class He was irreconcilable towards enemies but responsive to the needs of the people, and unsparing of his own efforts for their good Many residents of Algiers still remember how on his way to work at the Cen tral Committee he used to stop at the "Tlemcen" or some other cafe and linger long in conversation with the factory and office workers or students sitting at the tables His words

were sincere and convincing, and reflected his ardent belief in the justice of his cause Most of all he liked to talk to young people, and would often wind up a conversation by recommending books for them to read It was not unusual for him to bring the books with him One of the most popular was Maxim Gorky s *Mother*

His young hearers returned Kaddour's affection and sought his company After such conversations and discussions with him, many young people joined the Communist Party

Kaddour Belkaim made a close study of the international developments of the period He recognised the danger of the growth of fascism in Germany and Italy He saw that concessions to fascism in the West might well lead to internal political complications in North Africa, including Algeria In his organisational capacity in the Central Committee of the C P A , he began in 1939 to build up an effective underground Party network But he was not fated to finish the job

The colonialists sensed the threat that lurked in his activity, and decided to get rid of him Late in August 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, he was arrested and thrown into the Barberousse Prison The following month the colonial authorities outlawed the Communist Party of Algeria and began to persecute its members Many of its leaders were arrested and sent to prison and concentration camps But the Communist Party found ways of continuing the struggle against fascism, reaction and political terror The Communists retained their organisations despite their illegal standing Belkaim's timely efforts to establish an underground Party network now stood them in good stead

The persecution of Algerian patriots was intensified upon the formation in June 1940 of the pro fascist Vichy cabinet in France But even then the C P A kept up its active work It was the only one of all the national parties of the time to succeed in restoring its organisations on an underground basis and getting clandestine work under way

Kaddour Belkaim, soldier of freedom and patriot, kept

up the fight even from his prison cell He protested against the prison regime and alerted the other prisoners to action His staunch conduct was a model of struggle against the prison authorities On behalf of the rights of the political prisoners he declared a hunger strike and urged others to follow his example The prison authorities hardly dared to do bodily harm to Belkaim while he was in a civilian jail for he was too well known And so they transferred him to a military prison, where he was held in solitary confinement for months This was calculated slow murder After that long period of solitary confinement under conditions unfit for human life, Belkaim contracted tuberculosis His condition became grave, and in June 1940 he was released in the expectation that he was no longer fit to carry on the fight

But he went straight out of prison to look for contacts with the leadership of the Party, and returned to active Party work right away

Several days later he was arrested and imprisoned once more, and then, because of his serious illness, placed in the Algiers military hospital where the conditions were nothing short of inhuman He was given a French Jesuit nurse who looked down on him as a double criminal, an Arab and a Communist No medicines or treatment were administered, everything was done to prevent his leaving that hospital alive He realised that his enemies meant to exterminate him physically Mustering all his strength, he planned an escape, but at the critical moment collapsed, and the attempt failed

His condition grew worse daily On July 30, 1940, at the age of 32, Kaddour Belkaim breathed his last on a cot in the Algiers military hospital His countrymen lost one of the first leaders of the Algerian Communist Party, a pioneer of the national liberation movement in Algeria and tireless champion of the rights of the working class

Tahar Ghomri

Tahar Ghomri

Tahar Ghomri was born on May 16, 1909, in the village of Ouchba, near Tlemcen Like his father before him, he was a peasant working a small plot of land His whole class conscious life was dedicated to defending the interests of the agricultural workers and poor peasants of his country

Ghomri began to look for a militant organisation that would stand up for the rights of the long suffering peasantry The Ulama Union in whose work he had actively participated concerned itself mainly with religious and cultural questions Gradually he came to see that the Communist Party alone could help the Algerian peasant He joined the Party in 1946 and was instructed to continue his work among the peasants of the Tlemcen area The amalgamation of the farm workers and poor peasants in a union of small scale cultivators received his particular attention It was not long before his selfless dedication and organisational skill brought him recognition, and he became one of the prominent leaders of the Party

He was elected to the Central Committee of the C P A at its 4th Congress in April 1947

In 1951, he visited the USSR with a delegation of Friends of the Soviet Union He went to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, eager to see the progress of those republics, and studied the work of various public organisations there On his return to Algeria he gave talks before working class audiences conveying his impressions of the USSR to his hearers and describing the achievements of the Soviet people

Home again, he dedicated himself with redoubled energy to his work, particularly to the problems of the peasantry The results of his wide organisational and educational activities were evident during the liberation war A good many people in his district joined up with the guerillas and fought valiantly against the colonialists Those who remained behind

showed great political maturity and solidarity, helping the guerillas in every way they could

In May 1955 the French colonial authorities sent Tahar Ghomri out of the Tlemcen area He soon came back clandestinely and resumed his activities

In March 1956, Ghomri enlisted in the National Liberation Army as a rank and file soldier His political training organisational knack and gallantry distinguished him among his fellows, and he was appointed political commissar of one of the sub sectors, then of a whole sector, and finally of a district

He was severely wounded during a clash with colonialist forces in the vicinity of Sidi Bel Abbes, and taken prisoner He died later in an army hospital

His example of service to his people inspired other Algerian patriots battling for the freedom and future of their country

Mohammed Guerrouf

Mohammed Guerrouf

Mohammed Guerrouf was born in 1918 at Douar Loulach, in the Aures area He came of poor peasant stock and began his workaday life on the land

In 1939, Guerrouf was recruited to the French Army He fought in its ranks against nazi Germany until he was captured by the enemy After three years' detention as a war prisoner, he returned to Algeria a convinced anti fascist, and soon joined the Communist Party

As a former peasant he was keenly interested in the lot of the tillers of the soil He immersed himself wholly in the task of organising the peasant movement The Party sent him to the Aures area, the future centre of the Algerian Revolution, to draw the local peasants into a union of small cultivators capable of defending their interests Simultaneously he conducted extensive work in the adjacent mountain area, spreading the influence of the Party, explaining its platform, and setting up Party groups Himself a native of that comparatively inaccessible locality, he enjoyed the high est esteem of its dwellers Guerrouf organised the struggle of the peasants against the colonial administration The com munist groups he formed successfully resisted not only the colonialists but also the pull of tribal customs, which were being insidiously cultivated by the colonial administration

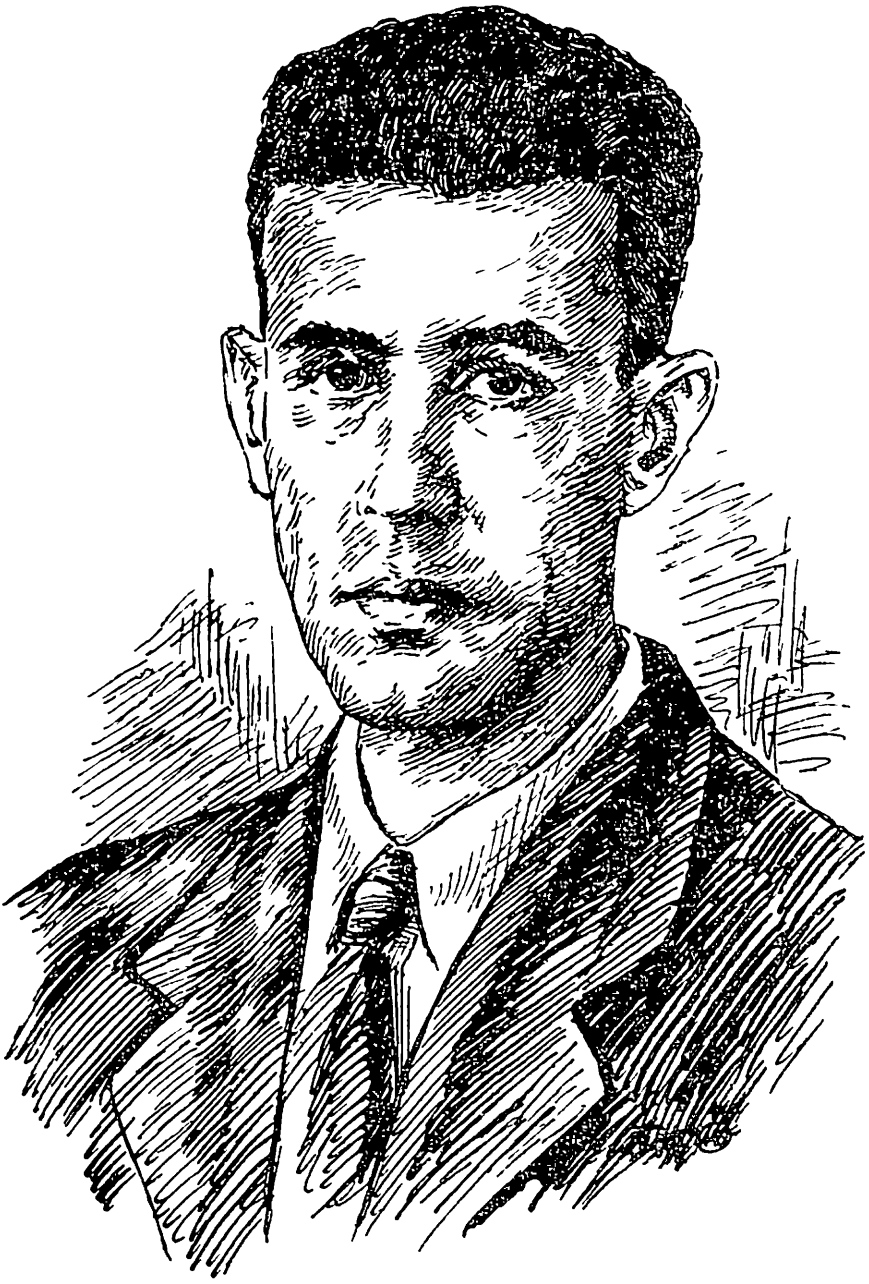
Mohammed Guerrouf became a national figure In 1946, he was elected to the Constantine municipal Party Committee, and, in June 1949, at the 5th Congress of the C P A , to its Central Committee

Guerrouf was highly instrumental in strengthening the position of the Communist Party throughout most of Aures by the time of the 1954 uprising In fact, the C P A became the principal, and in some centres, the only party The importance of his work was fully demonstrated in 1954, when the national liberation war of the Algerian people broke out

Aures proved not only the cradle of the war, but one of the fiercest battle areas It was also the district where the population extended the liberation fighters the most active help from the very first days of the struggle

From November 1954, Guerrouf worked all out to gain support for the uprising and maintain contacts between the Aures guerillas and the Central Committee of the C P A But in 1955 he was arrested by the colonial authorities and given a two years' prison term which he served in the city of Oran The colonialists feared his very presence in Aures and on his release from prison forbade him to live anywhere in his native parts Before long they arrested him again and sent him to a concentration camp

No sooner was he released from that camp than he joined up with the Aures guerillas and fought beside his townsmen against the hated colonialists He knew no fear But he did not live to see the dawn of the day when the banner of freedom and independence was raised over Algeria His life was cut short in March 1961 during heavy guerilla fighting against a colonial force much superior in numbers which dropped napalm bombs on his detachment



Laid Lamrani

Laid Lamrani

Laid Lamrani was born in 1916 in the town of Batna He finished the Law Department of the University of Toulouse, and as a student was connected with French working class organisations, including the Young Communist League Through them he first came into contact with the working-class movement and the activities of the organised prole tariat On the completion of his studies, he returned to Batna to practise law His professional competence and integrity soon made him popular with the wide masses in Batna and the rest of Aures Parallel with his work, he continued his study of Marxist literature, his conviction that the only correct road was that charted by Marxism grew He openly avowed his communist ideas The colonial authorities began to regard him with suspicion Despite their disfavour, his popularity rose, as his appointment to the chairmanship of the Batna Collegium of Advocates showed

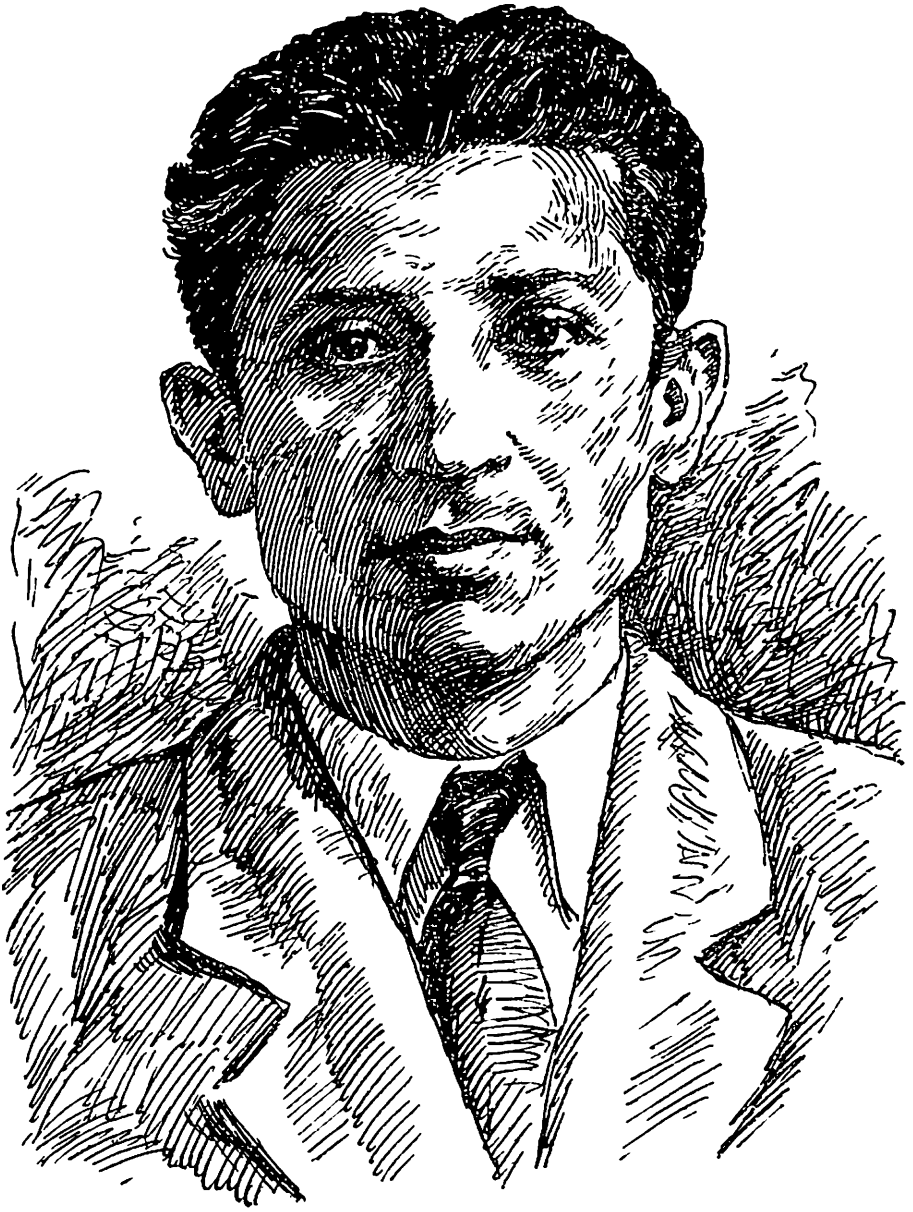
Laid Lamrani joined the Communist Party in 1945 and from then on gave much of his time to political work He conducted propaganda meetings and distributed the Party press He was active in the election campaigns and ran many times as a Communist Party candidate But he did not give up his practice, in fact, he even extended its scope For his staunch defence of the interests of the working people, the peasants of Aures called him "the poor man's lawyer" He not only defended them at the bar, often without accepting a fee for his services, but he gave them guidance as well, he tried to make them see that their only salvation lay in political struggle He gained such esteem and good repute that he was elected a city councilman in spite of objections by the French colonial authorities to his candidacy

Laid Lamrani held responsible Party posts in Batna and afterwards in Constantine In 1949, at the 5th Congress of the C P A he was elected to its Central Committee His

activity helped to raise the Party's prestige in Batna and its environs and to strenghten its positions The Communist Party gained far more votes in the local elections there than any of the other national political parties In the years preceding the armed uprising, when preparations were afoot for open resistance to the colonialists, Lamrani defended the prominent leaders of the national liberation movement before the law

The colonial authorities could hardly ignore such activities of a well known communist lawyer, especially after the Algerian people went to war for the independence of their country Early in 1955, an order was issued forbidding him to reside in Batna or anywhere else around Constantine Lamrani was banished from the city of his birth But in the summer of 1955 he came back illegally and joined up with the Aures guerillas operating in the mountains He fought in the ranks of the National Liberation Army for the happiness of his people as a soldier and in his capacity as a lawyer He died like a hero in one of the battles for the liberation of Algeria

He was not the only member of his family to die for his country One of the streets in Batna has been named in honour of the Lamrani brothers who were killed in action and is now called the Lamrani Brothers Street



Bouali Taleb

Bouali Taleb

Bouali Taleb was born on February 10, 1916, in the village of La Ferme, not far from Al Asnam His joyless childhood passed in toil He could not go to school and grew up illiterate He was only thirteen when he set out for Algiers to look for a job There he apprenticed himself to a plumber He was taught the trade by a German anti fascist worker who had emigrated to Algiers His teacher told the inquisitive lad who could neither read not write about the life of the workers, about international solidarity, about the class and anti imperialist struggle That was all quite new to the young Bouali Day after day he drank in the anti-fascist worker's stories It did not take him long to realise that an illiterate person could not understand what was going on around him On the advice and with the help of his fellow workers Bouali Taleb began to attend evening courses In six months he had learned to read and was giving every spare minute to the study of the political books the German worker lent him

Contacts with other workers, the reading of political books and the desire to understand events soon had their effect Bouali Taleb grasped the role of the working class in society and his own place in the struggle for the rights of the toiling masses In 1934, he joined the Young Communist League Two years later, in view of his active work in that organisation, he was made one of its secretaries In 1936, he became a member of the Algerian Communist Party and was assigned to educational work among the youth

When the big strike wave rolled over the country in 1936, the plumber Bouali Taleb took a very active and direct part in the organisation and realisation of the strikes He went from one building site to another, talking to the workers and urging them to go on strike

When the C P A was banned by the colonial authorities

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in 1939 Taleb fought for its legalisation and distributed the Party s publications He was arrested in 1940 and sent to a concentration camp in the southern part of the department of Oran

The British and American landing in North Africa at the end of 1942 culminated in the expulsion of the nazi troops from Algeria That strengthened the movement against the colonial regime The Algerian people exposed the French colonialists' designs to secure the sanction of the allied army in keeping the native population down The anti colonial mood plus the general changes in the international situation resulted in certain changes in Algeria as well In the spring of 1943, the Communists were released from the concentration camps In May 1943 Bouali Taleb regained his freedom His stay in the camp had not broken the young Communist s will, and he resumed his active Party work He became the head of the Algerian communist youth organisation, a post he held for a number of years

The C P A regained its legal status, and its popular prestige soared The Communist Party proved the most efficiently organised detachment of the anti colonial move ment The main task Algerian Communists set themselves at that time was to smash fascism Bouali Taleb explained the Party's platform to his young countrymen, whose contri bution to political life and the fight against fascism he sought to extend His energy and devotion to the cause of the working people placed him among the foremost leaders of the Party At its 3rd Congress in March 1946, he was elected to the Central Committee of the C P A and made one of the secretaries of its Algiers branch

After the end of the Second World War, the question of political reforms in Algeria again came squarely to the fore The Communists of Algeria, supported by the progressive section of the Algerian proletariat, bent their efforts towards unification of the ranks of the Algerian toilers and amalga mation of all the democratic and anti colonial forces of the

country At its July 1946 plenary meeting, the Central Committee of the C P A focused considerable attention, along with other social and political questions on the national-liberation movement The leadership of the Party came out in favour of the projected formation of an Algerian Democratic Republic with its own constitution parliament and government It urged the abolition of the colonial administration and the immediate election by universal suffrage of an Algerian National Assembly To ensure the success of the anti colonial struggle the Party as early as 1946 appealed to all Algerian nationalists and progressive minded Europeans to join forces in a National Democratic Front under the slogan of 'For freedom, land and bread for a free, united and democratic Algeria! From then on the Communists, overriding the nationalists rejection of united action, tirelessly amalgamated all the anti colonial forces of the country

Bouali Taleb, as ever, promoted the realisation of the Party s line and participated in all its political campaigns, electoral included He ran repeatedly as a Communist Party candidate Neither did he relinquish his close ties with the workers In order to live with and feel their daily needs, he resumed his trade of plumber in 1950 The following year he was elected by the union membership to a leading post in the district Building Workers' Union and then was made its secretary

A fierce earthquake destroyed Orleansville (now Al-Asnam) in August 1954 Thousands of people perished in the disaster, and there is no counting how many were hurt Bouali Taleb lost no time in going to Orleansville to help the victims He was one of the organisers of quick and effi cient aid to the populace by the trade unions The Building Workers Union of which he was a functionary was one of the first to rise to the need of the hour

Upon the outbreak of the liberation war, Bouali Taleb concentrated his energies on the formation of communist combat units For that purpose he returned to his birthplace

near Orleansville, where he and his fellow Communists set up Liberation Fighters units These units started operations in the vicinity pending the arrival of the National-Liberation Army on the scene After the agreement concluded in June 1956 between the National-Liberation Front and the Communist Party on the fusion of the Communist Liberation Fighters with the National-Liberation Army, Taleb carried his activities over to the NLA In June 1956, the command of the NLA appointed him a member of the General Staff of the 4th district of the Third Military Zone (*Willaya IV*),* where he was put in charge of intelligence and liaison Shortly afterwards he was transferred to the 4th district of the Second Military Zone In the course of hostilities, he proved his mettle as an organiser, a daring and resourceful soldier He initiated many an operation against the French colonialists

In July 1957, during a clash with the colonialists' troops, he died heroically on the battlefield, gun in hand

* * *

The memory of Kaddour Belkaim, Bouali Taleb, Mohammed Guerrouf, Laid Lamrani and Tahar Ghomri, prominent leaders of the Algerian Communist Party who laid down their lives for the happiness of their people and country, will be cherished by all Algerian patriots

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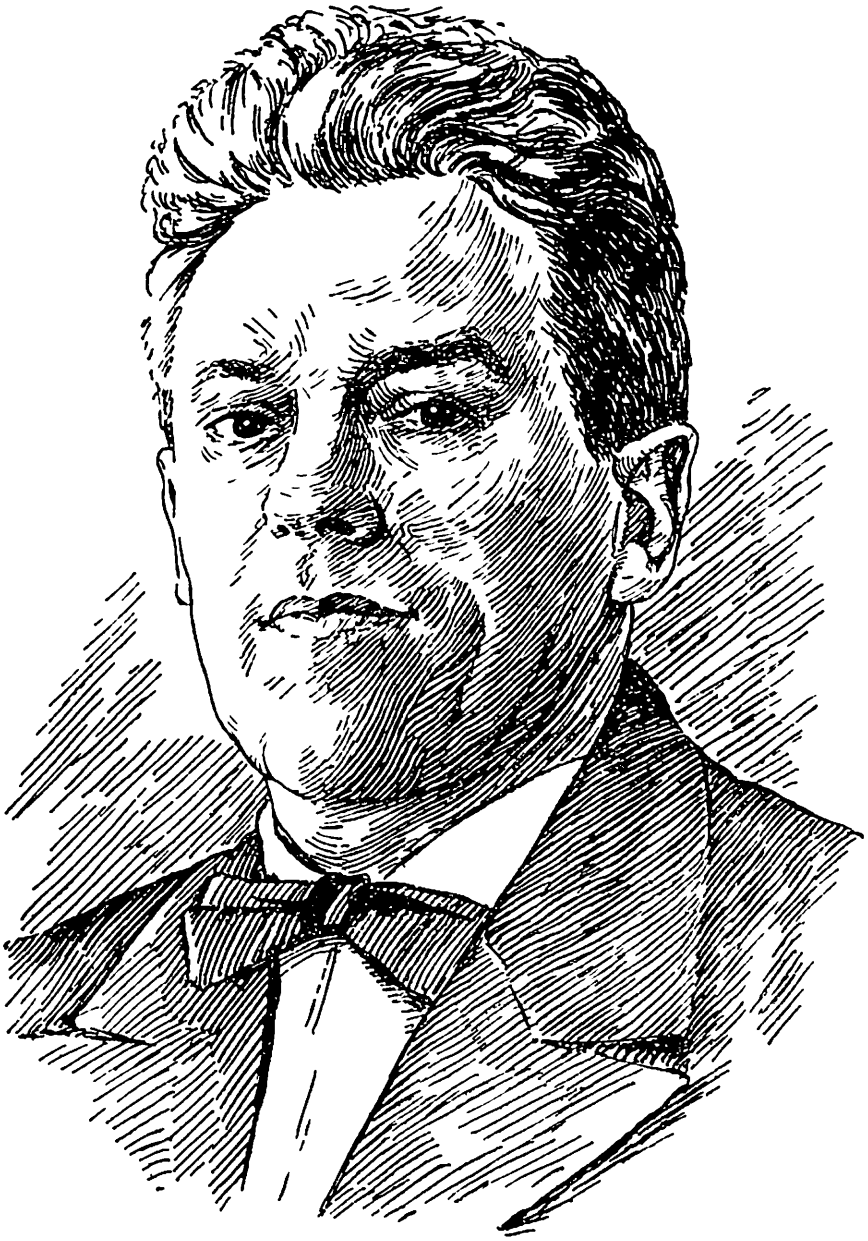
* During the Liberation War of 1954—1962, Algeria was divided into six *Willaya*, or military areas which were subdivided into zones, districts and sectors



Julien Lahaut

Julien Lahaut

"There is our Lord the Sun who comes to greet the land of Flanders He is bright and warm Be sincere as he is bright and kind as he is warm!

The Legend of Ulenspiegel
by Charles de Coster

Big lion hearted Julien Lahaut was a native of a small town in a small country Though not large Belgium is famed for its big industries and militant working class Seraing where Julien Lahaut was born in 1884, sprang up around the engineering and steel plants of the British manufacturer Cockerill Today it is a working class suburb of Liege, one of the country s biggest industrial centres

Industrial Belgium runs in a narrow strip from west to east across the whole country It extracts coal and smelts steel It is the home of the miner, steel worker, machine builder and chemist, the heart of working class Belgium Black dust black coal mounds black blast furnaces that never grow cold, smoke blackened factory chimneys, the black faces of the miners and black mining towns have earned it the name of "the black country" In its all too short periods of boom, it is a haven to which peasants from the adjacent districts and countries flock, at times of recession and crisis it is the very incarnation of poverty and despair

Julian Lahaut was born into a working class family His father, an experienced metal worker, was prominent in the trade union movement Wages were beggarly then, although people worked more than twelve hours a day There was no labour protection at all, and not enough labour legislation to make a difference The capitalists did not recognise the workers' right to organise in trade unions Strikes were ruthlessly suppressed

The cruel persecution of the strikers in 1896 in the town of Seraing, Lahaut's birthplace, was thus described by Karl Marx

" the quite legitimate strike of the puddlers in the Cockerill Ironworks, at Seraing was only converted into a riot by a strong posse of cavarly and gendarmerie suddenly launched upon that place in order to provoke the people From the 9th to the 12th of April these stout warriors not only recklessly charged with sabre and bayonet the unarmed workmen, they indiscriminately killed and wounded harmless passers by, forcibly broke into private houses, and even amused themselves with repeated furious onslaught on the travellers pent up in the Seraing Railway Station "

Like all working class families, the Lahauts lived in need Julien s father often lost his job because of his trade union activities His mother kept house and did not work No sooner had he finished primary school than their son, then fourteen years of age, went to work in a factory He became a metal worker like his father

In 1902, when he was eighteen, Julien took part in his first political strike and was fired as one of its leaders That did not frighten him He was convinced of the necessity of organising the workers and gave all of himself to the task of building up the union In 1905, he and his comrades founded the Union of Liege Metal Workers, one of the most militant in Belgium Shortly afterwards he was elected its secretary All Belgian unions were affiliated with the Party of Labour

The Belgian Party of Labour of that period was a rather singular organisation Formed in 1885 as a party of the proletarian masses, it took in consumers' and producers' cooperative societies, trade unions, sports societies, educational circles, loan societies, pension offices, cultural associations, etc Members of these organisations automatically became members of the Party of Labour Each existed almost independently and, more often than not, was only formally connected with the Party Thus the Party of Labour represented a conglomeration of the most diverse social strata and ideological trends Little by little the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie took precedence, and the influence of the opportunist elements in the Party increased

In April 1913, the whole of Belgium was shaken by a general political strike The liberal bourgeoisie and toiling masses wanted the restrictions on the suffrage lifted, they demanded reduction of the property and educational requirements, and abolition of the right to cast several votes and other privileges of the nobility and the rich The proletariat proved to be the main revolutionising factor in the fight for universal suffrage But the Party of Labour was not able to lead the proletariat to victory

Despite the solidarity and militancy of the 500,000 Belgi an workers who took part in the strike, it culminated in a compromise The government went no further than the mere promise to appoint a commission to work out a suffrage reform

In his article, "Lessons of the Belgian Strike", Lenin stressed two main reasons for the partial failure of the strike "The first reason," he said, "is the prevalence of opportunism and reformism among a section of the Belgian socialists, particu larly the parliamentarians Accustomed to allying themselves with the Liberals, those parliamentarians feel dependent upon the Liberals in all they do

"The second reason for the partial failure is the weakness of the workers' organisations and the weakness of the Party in Belgium The Party of Labour in Belgium is a union of

the politically organised with the politically unorganised workers the 'pure cooperators professionalists etc That is a large defect of the working class movement in Belgium

The Liege workers were in the front ranks of the strikers As for Lahaut, he was in the very thick of the struggle one of its leaders The unsuccessful strike ended in the arrest of its organisers and their trial

During the First World War, Julien Lahaut happened to be in Russia He was an eye witness of the Revolution and the birth of the workers state The ideas of the October Revolu tion transformed the young trade union leader with very hazy political views into a confirmed revolutionary and internatio nalist Upon his return to Belgium Lahaut organised a broad campaign in defence of young socialist Russia

The Russian Revolution evoked heated discussion in the Belgian Party of Labour Lahaut urged the workers to affili ate themselves with the Third International

In 1921 the steel workers at the Ougree Marihaye plant near Liege stayed out on strike for seven months Their bosses made it a battle of attrition Lahaut headed the strike By that time he had become a recognised leader of the masses An inspiring orator and gifted organiser brave to the point of rashness supremely devoted to the people staunch and self sacrificing, he deservedly enjoyed the love of the Belgian workers He was a tall well built man, with proudly set head and a face that expressed will power and vigour, the bright ness of his temperament always distinguished him among his fellow men A sparkling smile lit up his countenance, and his eyes radiated the goodness and warmth of his nature Brought up in a workers' family, always in touch with the toiling people, he knew, felt, understood the needs of his class brothers When a strike broke out somewhere, he was there When the people needed to be cheered up, when their strength began to ebb, Lahaut was the man who was sent to them He restored their faith and confidence and explained where they had erred When a situation grew tense and sabres and police

clubs went into action Lahaut was in the front row of the strikers Even today the old workers of Liege recall the cla shes with the gendarmes and our Julien who fought like a tiger He was always the first to plunge into battle and the last to leave the field The genius of strikes he was called by journalists while the workers knew him as the soul of every strike

The Right Social Democrats betrayed the strike of 1921 by entering into negotiations with the employers behind La haut s back They charged him with mismanaging the strike and expelled him from the union Before long Lahaut and his fellow strikers organised a new revolutionary union of metal workers affiliated with the Profintern In 1923, he joined the Belgian Communist Party, and a year later became a mem ber of its Central Committee and Political Bureau At the same time he was the secretary of the Liege Union of Metal Workers and a member of the Profintern Executive In 1925, he was elected to the Liege municipal council, and in 1926, became a councilman in his native town of Seraing He continued to serve as councilman until 1933, when he was elected to parli ament And even after that he kept in close touch with the town of his birth

The year 1932 saw the strike in Borinage, the 'miners' land ' in the western part of the industrial belt One mining settlement there merges imperceptibly with the next Each miners' town, stepping close on the heels of the one before, presents the same picture dust, mine structures, hoisting carts and freight cars loaded with coal, black coal barges on the canals, and tiny smoke begrimed cabins standing in warped gardens The mine owners do not make their homes here, of course This is the domain of inhuman labour and ceaseless struggle, of poverty and need Its prematurely old inhabitants with deep wells of sorrow for eyes and bitter folds around their mouths are familiar to us from the canvases of Vincent Van Gogh, who once lived in Borinage

The lot of the miner is hard, but in Borinage it is harder

still The mines are old and their equipment obsolete The coal lies in a narrow layer deep under the ground, as far as 1,400 metres under the surface in some places But hard as the miner s life may be, it can be borne as long as there is work When unemployment comes, then things pass the limits of human endurance

For Belgium, as for the other capitalist countries, 1932 was a crisis year There was no market for coal Miners were laid off Miners stood in endless queues in front of the bureaus for the registration of the unemployed The mine owners reduced the working week, first to six and then to five and four days Wages were slashed The last straw was the announcement of a further wage cut beginning the next day On June 19th, a meeting was called at Vasmes Thousands of miners listened to speeches by Joseph Jacquemot, founder of the Communist Party of Belgium and recognised leader of the Belgian Communists, and Julien Lahaut The Communists led the strike From Vasmes the miners deployed throughout the neighbouring towns to gain support for the strike The movement grew, by July 9th all of Borinage was striking

Miners picketed the gates to the mines and stood watch in the yards The women brought food for the pickets Demonstrators carrying red and black banners, the emblems of rebellious poverty and suffering, filed through the streets Revolutionary songs rang out

The strike was defeated, and the communist militants who led it were arrested and thrown into prison The judges charged the leaders of the strike with conspiring against the state Quotations from Lenin's writings were cited as evidence This blatantly anti communist trial was the prelude to large scale persecutions Jacquemot was the only member of the Political Bureau of the C P B who was not arrested, the reaction being unable to deprive him of his parliamentary inviolability, all the other members were jailed

Lahaut's parliamentary activities began in 1932 From the rostrum of parliament he defended the vital interests of

the toilers called for active struggle against fascism and war, and exposed the Munich policy of the Belgian government In 1936 he was given a six months' sentence for an altercation in parliament with the Rexists, or Belgian fascists That was his 25th court sentence

Then came democracy's first battle against fascism—the national revolutionary war in Spain Lahaut could not stay out His comrades saw him off to Spain On his return to Belgium he adopted three Spanish orphans

In June 1936, elections were again held in Belgium The Communist Party came to the polls with a democratic platform whose main plank was united action by the working class The elections were followed by a general strike which brought the workers victory Their claims for higher wages and better working conditions were satisfied Lahaut had been one of the organisers of the strike The Communists scored a major victory in the Liege elections Ten Communist deputies (there were only three in 1932) were elected to the Liege provincial council

Liege is one of Belgium s oldest cities It existed as a for tified town in the 8th century Many of its old churches, bel fries and palaces survived the ravages of time It has a uni versity and several other higher educational establishments, museums, picture galleries and concert halls The imposing centre of the city abounds in fine mansions, glittering shop windows, hotels, restaurants and cafes The suburbs are rows of grimy, close standing shanties in narrow streets and smoking chimneys on all sides Belgium s largest steel plants are clustered in the suburbs of Liege, Seraing and Ougree Around the steel plants there have mushroomed up chemical and engineering establishments which produce motors, rail way cars, automobiles, electrical equipment, and so on

Liege is a workers' town The bulk of the population of Greater Liege is made up of miners, metal workers, blast furnacemen, chemical operatives, arms makers, glass blowers

In the summer of 1936, when in neighbouring Germany

Hitler began to prepare for war while in France the Popular Front scored victory, the workers of Liege commanded a majority in the provincial council 44 of the deputies were Socialists and Communists, while 42 belonged to the reaction (8 Liberals, 12 Catholics and 22 fascists) Sensing the immediacy of the fascist threat, the Communists and Socialists decided to unite their forces and assume full responsibility in the Council They formed a Permanent Deputies Group of Socialists and Communists which actually ruled the town Lahaut was the moving spirit of that group

The joint platform adopted by the Communists and Socialists advanced three main tasks to fight for peace and international security, to resist fascism and all enemies of democracy, and defend and extend the constitutional liberties, to satisfy the basic demands of the working people The Permanent Group drafted, pushed through the provincial council and implemented a number of measures for the betterment of the workers living conditions

With the victory of the 1936 strike, the workers gained the right to paid vacations But it was not always easy for them to enjoy that right, as hotels and restaurants are too expensive for workers The Liege provincial council decided to build a recreational centre where anyone could secure a room and meals cheaply and engage in healthful athletic pastimes It was a grandiose project requiring millions of francs, but was hailed with such enthusiasm that it was quickly realised

Allocations for housing construction were increased The building of roads, bridges, water supply systems, schools, hospitals and other public amenities was launched with the aim of deterring unemployment Unemployment allowances were raised by 25 per cent Relief for invalided miners was increased The tax on bicycles, the poor man's limousine, was cut, while automobile taxes went up

Funds were channelled for the construction and expansion of technical and medical training schools The T B

and women's sanatoriums were renovated Larger appropriations were approved for the orphanage, the conservatory, museums and libraries Exhibitions were organised Tourism was widely advertised, including trips to the USSR Measures aimed at improving the conditions of the small and middle peasants were also adopted

The activities of the deputies of "Red Liege" had tremendous repercussions throughout the length and breadth of the land The Rights started a rabid slander campaign against the Liege deputies Besides, dogmatists had cropped up in the leadership of the Belgian Communist Party They accused Lahaut and the other Liege Communists of opportunism, of a social democratic deviation, of factionalism They recalled that Lahaut had been a member of the Party of Labour for many years before joining the Belgian Communist Party They wanted the Liege Communists to break with the Socialists and leave the Permanent Group, Lahaut was told not to support their activities He objected categorically to that line His whole life and all his bitter experience as a striker had taught him that unity was a guarantee of success 'The situation is getting tense," he said, "the fascist menace is growing We must strengthen and not reject united action Of course, the struggle against the Rights is necessary, but for that struggle to be effective, propaganda must be conducted within the working class, which for the most part supports the Socialists, traitors must be isolated and friendship maintained with those who are fighting honestly for the rights of the working people Victory is impossible without active and decisive action by the toiling masses themselves " Lahaut staunchly defended the Liege experiment The sectarians insisted on his expulsion from the Communist Party It was entirely due w the intercession of the Comintern Executive on his behalf cer t he retained his Party ticket

every ' en Lahaut remained throughout an ardent champion only carried the eve of the Second World War, when the threat fighters for tl loomed for Belgium and the Rexists came bra

zenly into the open, the Communist Party submitted a propo sal for united action to the Party of Labour "A split means surrender, defeat, a bloody fascist dictatorship Unity is a guarantee of victorious movement towards peace, well being and socialism Comrade Socialists! Our duty is dictated to us by a great danger, either we unite or we perish " The appeal was signed by Lahaut and other leaders The Socialists rejec- ted it, however, and so opened the doors to fascism

The war began The internal reaction went over to the offensive The government drafted a bill "in defence of natio nal institutions" placing all organisations whose activities might be classified as "subversion of national institutions" under a ban Infractions of the new law were subject to trial by the Supreme Military Court The Communist deputies Lahaut and his comrades fought the bill tooth and nail In an address to parliament, Lahaut exposed its unconstitutional nature 'It is a pirates' law," he said "It destroys the right to unite and the last remnants of the democratic freedoms If it is adopted, the trade unions, Party of Labour and other democratic groups will be its victims Today it is after the Communists, and tomorrow it will go for the Socialists and trade unionists " The majority of the socialist deputies voted for the law on whose basis they themselves later rotted in concentration camps

The Hitlerites invaded Belgium The Communist Party went underground In the spring of 1941, under Lahaut s direction 100,000 Liege workers came out on strike That was the first mass working class action against the invaders

The Party entrusted Lahaut to head the fight for freedom and independence He was very active in organising armed detachments of patriots until that work was intercepted by his arrest On June 22, 1941, Lahaut was seized by the Ge tapo, imprisoned in a fortress, and the usual interrogati torture and abuse followed In reply to his jailer's of "We will destroy Russia!" came his calm reb is on the side of the Red Army It is bound t

n and expan

The T B

In September 1941, Lahaut was railroaded to Germany, where he spent four years in the death camps at Neuengamme and then Mauthausen They were four years of hunger and tor ture Yet Lahaut never seemed to know fear or doubt He was remarkably brave and staunch and never lost his presence of mind His comrades turned to him as to a pillar of strength, they knew they could always count on his comfort and help

They had planned every last detail of their break away All was in readiness Lahaut s comrade escaped, Lahaut was left behind Again he endured solitary confinement and tortu re But there lived in the man a faith in the justice of his cause that nothing could kill A Polish officer who had been his friend at camp later recalled "It was as though he went about with his pockets stuffed with sunshine, he dispensed some of his warmth on everyone " His optimism and joy of life never deserted him He always met his friends with a sparkling smile and a light in his flashing eyes He was not merely a popular leader, he was a man people could not help loving All who chanced to meet him remembered him for the rest of their days No one could resist his spiritual warmth, the passion of his belief, his glowing eloquence and his infinite love of life

Lahaut did not see the last of concentration camp until April 22, 1945, when the Hitler Reich collapsed His re turn to Seraing was the occasion for a huge popular manife station

In August 1945, Lahaut was elected chairman of the Com munist Party of Belgium He continued to work as a parlia- mentarian, a spokesman for the people

Before the war, the Belgian Communist Party had 10,000 members Its membership dwindled considerably during the war 3,500 Communists had been thrown into prisons and con centration camps, 2,000 Communists were killed One out of every five Communists had died But the Communists not only carried on—they were the most active and fearless fighters for the honour and independence of their country

In the five years immediately following the war, the Belgian working class waged a fierce struggle for democracy, for the improvement of their living standards, and against Belgium's commitments to aggressive blocs The Communists marched in the vanguard of the struggle which reached its apex in 1950 with a wave of political strikes that rocked the land

The economy of the capitalist countries was hard hit by the slump of 1948 and 1949 Output dropped in Belgium too Deliveries of American Marshall Plan goods inundated the already constricted internal market and aggravated the effects of the crisis in the country Factories were closed and unemployment soared By January 1950, the number of unemployed was up at 340,000 Prices climbed steadily Bread, butter, meat and margarene were dearer, rates for gas, coal, electricity, transportation and rent went up

Belgium joined NATO in 1949 Military outlays rose To cover the budget deficit, the government curtailed unemployment allowances and pensions and increased a number of popular taxes

The working people rallied to the defence of their rights They demanded a high cost of living wage increment, the forty hour week, bigger pensions, better social insurance provisions, and a cut in arms expenditures

The Belgian monopolies did all they could to tighten their hold on the country The reaction tried to reinstate Leopold III, the collaborationist king who had helped Hitler during the war It sought to impose a fascist regime on the country, and crush the growing resistance of the masses

As soon as the war ended, the Belgian parliament deprived Leopold III of his constitutional powers, forbade him to return to the country without special permission, and appointed his brother regent of the realm But the ruling clique insisted on a referendum

On the eve of the referendum the Leopoldists let violence loose They raided the headquarters of the Communist and

Socialist parties and the editorial offices of progressive newspapers. Their armed gangs wrecked local centres of the Resistance Movement and murdered progressive leaders.

Joint Action Committees sprang up in the factories, building sites, villages, cities and communes. They led strikes, put up pickets, guarded the headquarters of democratic organisations. They arranged meetings and demonstrations and conducted propaganda against the return of King Leopold III to the throne.

In the past Leopold III had brought the country occupation and fascism. In the future Leopold III would bring it militarism, reprisals against democrats, unemployment and poverty. The working class, the progressive intellectuals and the section of the petty and middle bourgeoisie that not so long ago had participated in the Resistance formed an all-democratic united front against the pro-fascist dictatorship of Leopold. And the Liège Joint Action Committee took the initiative in that campaign.

The referendum was held on March 12, 1950. It gave Leopold III 58 per cent of the vote, while 42 per cent was cast against his return. In Liège, Charlerois and Borinage two-thirds of the electorate voted against Leopold. The Flemish provinces, however, with their more backward, predominantly peasant population which was under the influence of the Catholic church, voted for the king.

Following the referendum, the Belgian Communist Party appealed to all democrats and peace supporters to strengthen their unity of action and extend the strike movement. A general strike was held throughout Belgium on March 24 in protest against the king's return. Demonstrations and meetings displayed slogans demanding Leopold's abdication and calling for work and bread. The strikes continued through April and May. The government, fearful of the people's wrath, hesitated to bring back the king immediately. Special elections were set for July 4th.

The clergy and ruling Catholic Party, representing the

interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie, landlords and merchants, launched a desperate demagogic campaign on behalf of the king and against the Communists Playing on religious prejudices, the reaction succeeded in winning over a large section of the peasantry and the most backward workers who laboured under the influence of the Catholic trade unions The Catholic Party gained three more seats in the elections and so was assured of an absolute majority in parliament

The Communists insisted on an immediate general protest strike The leadership of the Socialist Party and Belgian general Federation of Labour sat on the fence

On July 20, 1950, the Catholic deputies' vote in parliament decided the issue in favour of the king's return Communists, Socialists and Liberals walked out in protest Leopold III returned from Switzerland on July 22nd That day a flag framed in black mourning was flown from the Liege Town Hall The Political Bureau of the C P B held a meeting on July 24 over which Julien Lahaut presided He declared "The question now is to demand the king's abdication and make him leave the country forever "

In Seraing thousands of people attended the meeting called by the Communists at which Lahaut delivered an inspired speech "We cannot afford to lose any time in bringing about the closest possible unity of all democratic forces if we really want to remove the terrible danger that threatens our country," he said Thirty thousand people came out in a huge demonstration against the king sponsored by the Joint Action Committee in Liege on July 29 The police tried to disperse the demonstrators and opened fire on them Many people were wounded A state of siege was declared in Liege The gendarmes cordoned off bridges and highways The coverings were taken off the guns

A ban on all meetings and demonstrations was issued by the Minister of Home Affairs A meeting took place on July 30 on the outskirts of Liege in defiance of the ban The police ordered the crowds to disperse When they refused the police

threw tear bombs and opened gun-fire Four people were killed and one seriously wounded

The police shootings aroused the whole country More than 700,000 workers stopped work and poured out of the factories and mines In the industrial districts of Belgium, the Unity Committees were actually in power In Liege the soldiers came over to the side of the workers, and the gendarmes had to surround the soldiers' barracks

August 1 was the day appointed for a nationwide march on Brussels The government imposed martial law in all the large cities Troops were brought in from Germany The march was outlawed But the government had to give in its guns and tanks had not helped it On August 1, representatives of the government, the Socialist Party, and the Belgian General Federation of Labour agreed that King Leopold should hand over his rights to Prince Baudouin, and, on the latter's coming of age, abdicate the throne The wide masses were not satisfied with that compromise They demanded the king's immediate abdication and expulsion from the country The relation of forces changed in favour of the Left bloc, which now took the initiative Compromise was tantamount to treason under the circumstances Despite the appeals issued by the leadership of the BGFL for the strikes and demonstrations to be discontinued, they went on in Brussels, Liege and other cities The Communists insisted on pursuing the fight, for, even though Leopold was ousted, the basic demands of the toilers for higher wages, a 40 hour week, increased pensions and so on had not been satisfied

At last Prince Baudouin ascended the throne amidst great pomp and ceremony in parliament The seats were filled with deputies and visitors The president of the chamber requested the Prince to assume his duties At that moment someone shouted "Long live the republic!" It was Julien Lahaut His act infuriated the Leopoldists

On August 18, 1950, a small grey car drew up in front of Lahaut's house in one of the most crowded districts of Seraing

at half past nine in the evening Two young men stepped out and rang the bell of Lahaut's flat His wife Geraldine Lahaut came to the door "May we see Comrade Lahaut? We have an urgent letter for him " "Come in, please, he's home," they were told Lahaut was having his supper, he rose and went to the door Two shots rang out They were fired point blank and struck Lahaut in the head As they rushed back to the car, the assassins fired two more shots, and Lahaut fell dead at his wife's feet

The assassins were never found All the Rexists held on suspicion were declared not guilty

The assassination roused the anger of the whole country The Communists, Socialists and Liberals in parliament demanded an explanation from the Home Minister, and insisted on an immediate inquiry into the circumstances of the murder and the punishment of its perpetrators

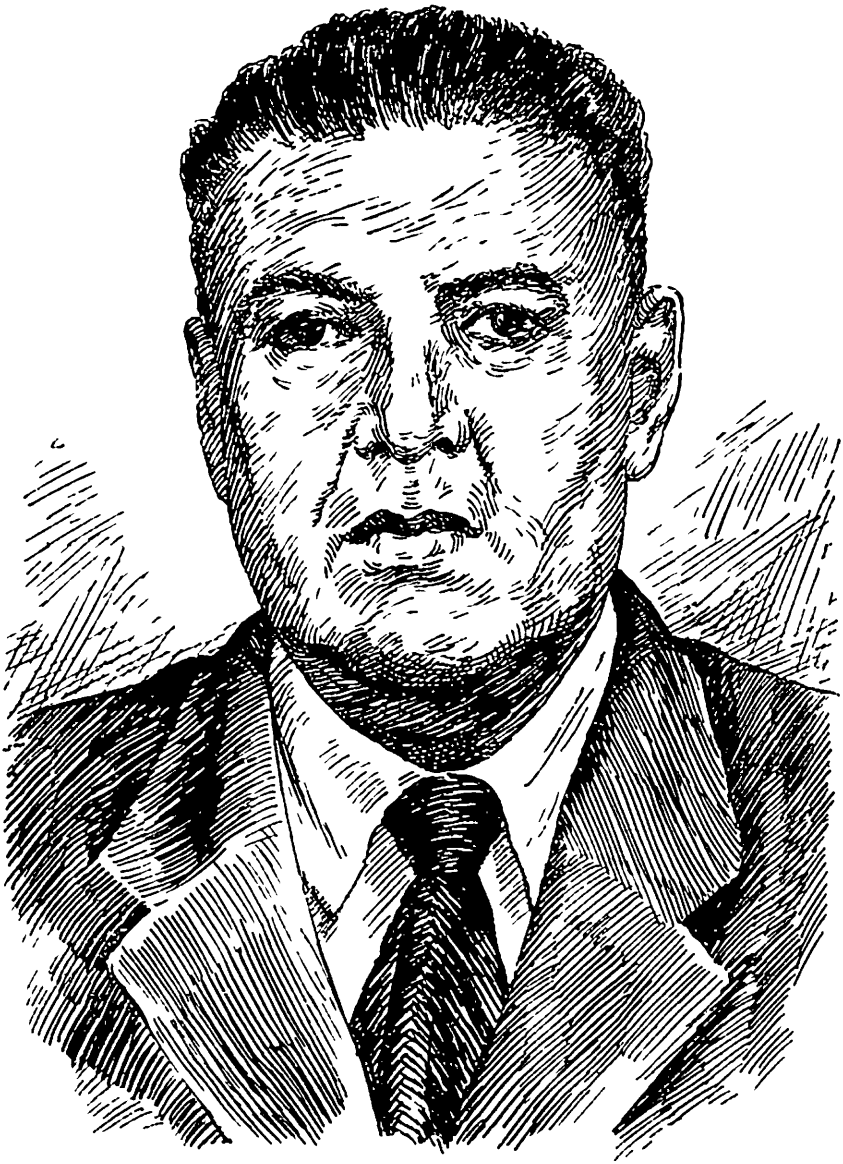
The working people of Liege province declared a strike in mourning for Lahaut The Socialist controlled General Federation of Labour supported the worker's initiative On the day of the funeral, the miners of Charlerois and Borinage went on strike That is how Belgium said farewell to its departed hero

On August 22, life came to a standstill in Liege Factory chimneys ceased smoking, tramcars and buses stopped running Complete silence reigned as the people poured in endless columns down the streets of Seraing Workers and teachers, miners and senators, Socialists and Communists, Liberals and Catholics, old men and children marched side by side It was like a vast sea of human beings, surging with red banners, flowers, wreaths and garlands The people followed their standard bearer on his last journey They were carried along by a great desire for unity in the name of peace against the danger of war, in the name of freedom against the policy of murder and concentration camps, in the name of their country's honour against its foreign subjugation, in the name of human dignity against exploitation They marched with

the dead man's battle cry in their hearts cherish unity, the unity of the workers, the toiling masses, the democrats for the sake of man, of life, of the happiness of the children

Lahaut is no more, but the struggle he gave his life for continues During the huge general strike of 1960-1961 the working class closed its ranks even more firmly The character of the strike movement changed The workers' struggle for economic demands developed into a nationwide move ment against the social policy of the government There was a call for structural reforms that would broaden the trade unions' rights at the enterprises The movement spread and reached heretofore unknown dimensions The workers led the struggle for the democratisation of their country They were joined by new contingents of engineers and technicians, doctors and teachers, civil service employees and peasants Unity was strengthened The fight for peace embraced the whole nation

The hero is dead, other heroes who have learned the lessons of their fathers now fill his place



Galo González Dias

Galo González Días

An elderly man with a grave liver condition was brought to a clinic in Santiago, capital of Chile, on February 21, 1958 The entry in the clinic register read Arturo Dias, aged 64 At once the best medical men were called in Seven eminent physicians examined the patient A consultation was held and an urgent operation advised, it was performed that very night

So much attention was showered on Arturo Dias that the clinical staff concluded he was a man of importance "Most likely a visiting millionaire," the nurses whispered But on closer inspection their patient resembled neither a foreigner nor a rich man His dark complexion, aquiline nose lively, deep set black eyes as well as his build suggested a native of Chile, and his work worn hands and shabby clothes— a man of the people He did not put on airs and was undemanding

For all the efforts of the doctors, the operation proved unsuccessful There was no doubt that Dias' days were numbered He, too, realised this, but retained his usual calm and bravely endured his sufferings Like other patients he was visited by relatives On one occasion when his son brought

along little Anna Maria, on whom her granddad obviously doted, a smile lingered on the patient s face for the rest of the day Apart from relatives many other visitors came to his ward, they were closeted for long hours in conversation with the dying man The nurses were amazed at his being able to bear the strain of so much talk

The patient breathed his last on March 8, and on the same day the true identity of the man registered as Arturo Dias was made known to the people of Chile That man possessed no money, but he could be called a "millionaire" because to him belonged the affection and regard of millions of working people, millions of hearts were wrung with pain at the sad news of his death The real name of the unassuming patient was Galo Gonzalez Dias, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile who had dedicated nearly forty years of his life to the Party and the fight for his people's happiness

An Inquilino Becomes a Communist

When Galo Gonzalez was born, at the close of the last century, the bulk of Chile's population was rural The *inquilino* was, even as he remains to this day, a typical figure of the Chilean countryside Actually an *inquilino* is a landless peasant to whom the landlord leases a hut and plot of land The leased property passes from father to son along with the poverty and debts The *inquilino* pays his debts to the landlord by working on his land or giving up a part of his own harvest All his life this unfortunate sweats on the land without being able to pay off his debts An *inquilino* is a peasant, tenant and farm labourer rolled into one and on top of it a semi serf whose debts bind him to the landowner's estate

The father of Galo Gonzalez came of several generations of *inquilinos* living in the village of Hijuelas de Nogales (Valparaiso) and had so ruined his health by hard toil even in his youth that he barely lived to the age of thirty five His

widow, Margarita Dias, was left with four sons of whom Galo, the eldest, was only eight years old After his father's death Galo quit elementary school and became his mother's main standby From sunrise till sunset he toiled with his mother to feed the family At sixteen, on coming of age, Galo at last ventured beyond the territory of his village Now and then he paid visits to Valparaiso, in the heart of his province The busy life of this big city, one of Chile's chief ports, broadened his outlook and made him eager to acquire knowledge On holidays or rainy winter evenings, Galo would get out his slate, spell words, do sums and try to recall what he had been taught at school Bit by bit he made progress in his studies and from that time onwards, self education became a lifetime habit with him

The year 1917 set in To the peasants of Nogales it was distinguished from other years merely by bringing them crop failure Margarita Dias and her family could no longer make both ends meet without outside earnings Rumour had it that miners were wanted at the El Teniente copper fields which belonged to the North-American Braden Cooper Com pany Galo, then twenty-four, decided to try his luck In the late autumn he left his native village He was never to return to it again, but his love for the farmer's toil with its closeness to nature remained with him for the rest of his life Later it found an outlet in gardening in which he engaged in his rare leisure hours

Young and sturdy, Galo Conzalez was not afraid of hard work He was glad to get a loader's job at the Fortuna copper mine Copper was in great demand on the world market at the time and the United States copper magnates sweated the miners to bring production up to a maximum The miners worked from ten to twelve hours a day with only a half hour's break for dinner They lived in long rambling barracks, pa cked together like sardines on rows of bunks Their meagre wages were not paid on time and they had to buy food and clothes on credit at the company stores which soaked them

double and treble the price The stores kept plenty of liquor in stock, the bosses encouraged drunkenness among the miners to distract them from the class struggle

Out of the six hundred miners working at the Fortuna pit only a few could read and write More educated than the others, hard-working, abstemious, sociable and friendly, Galo was at once liked by his fellow workers and stood high in their esteem

At free moments he often read the newspapers aloud to them Most of the time they had to be content with the bourgeois *El Mercurio*, the only newspaper delivered regularly to the mine It contained little news of interest to the workers and many lies But now and then the miners managed to get hold of *El Despertar de los Trabajadores* (The Workers' Awakening), a workers' paper popular in the north of Chile which contained news from Soviet Russia These Chilean miners were delighted with the successes of the workers and peasants who had taken the power into their own hands in the far off land Listening to Galo's reading they would toss their caps into the air, embrace each other and cheer

Galo soon drew the attention of the leaders of the miners' union They saw in him a thoughtful worker, unafraid to show his enmity for gringos, as the miners contemptuously called the American copper magnates Galo joined the Miners' Union and became a militant fighter against exploitation

At this time new vigour was infused into the working class movement The Russian revolution had raised the militant spirit of the Chilean workers and inspired them with fervid hope for their own deliverance from oppression

In former years, too, the Chilean workers had shown courage and steadfastness in fighting for their class interests In 1907, for example, many thousands of nitrate miners gathered in the city of Iquique demanding improvement of their appalling conditions of life The government drowned this first mass action by the Chilean proletariat in blood but it

could not crush the workers' will to struggle. In 1912, the Socialist Workers' Party was organised in Chile. It supported the Marxists' stand against the First World War and enthusiastically hailed the October Revolution. "Revolutionary Russia which has delivered the world from war, is the bastion of genuine democracy," said Luis Emilio Recabarren, the founder of this Party, in 1918, "the democracy of an honest toiling people. Greetings to that Russia!"

The strike movement in Chile spread considerably after 1917. It was led by the Workers' Federation of Chile (WFC) which joined the Profintern in 1921. The initiators of most of the strikes were nitrate and coal miners. They rallied to the struggle with great united strength, and the government, scared by their might, retaliated with savage repressions. In 1919, martial law was declared in a number of cities and even in entire provinces where "public order was endangered". Many trade union leaders were jailed and in a few areas the blood of the workers was shed.

In this struggle the militant revolutionary nucleus of the Socialist Workers' Party was steeled. A discussion was launched in the ranks of this Party in 1920 on the advisability of its affiliation to the Communist International. And in January 1922, at the Rancagua Congress, the Socialist Workers' Party was reorganised into the Communist Party of Chile.

From time to time strikes broke out at the Braden Company mines, too. Galo González took an active part in them. The miners' demands were an eight-hour day, no work on Sundays, and compensation for disablement, often resulting from the absence of safety devices. Early in 1920, when the wave of strikes subsided, the mine owners passed over to an offensive against the trade unions. Along with other progressive workers Galo González was fired from the Fortuna mine as an "instigator and trouble-maker".

Leaving behind his iron cot, the sole possession he acquired in three years' work and one that was considered a lux-

ury among the miners, Galo returned to his native province He got a job as a stevedore at the Valparaiso waterfront It was not long before he realised his cherished dream of relieving his mother of the peasant's hard toil

Margarita Dias and her younger son joined Galo, and the three settled in a small house by the sea, in a district for the poor But Galo was rarely at home He had already had a taste of revolutionary work and could not do without it He flung himself into the activities of the stevedores' union, a year later becoming one of its leaders After handling heavy crates, bales and sacks all day he spent his evenings at meetings or studying with a teacher and broadening his educational background

The years that followed were filled to the brim with work, struggle and studies Galo later joked that he did not even have the time to think of marrying He did marry, however, as his thirtieth year approached

It was on a holiday that a fellow villager, a dark eyed young girl called Maria Carmen Huerta, came to see Margarita Dias Driven from the village by poverty she asked Galo's mother to help her find a job in town In a short while she got work in a laundry It was this girl who became the lifetime partner of Galo Gonzalez As the wife of the militant stevedore her life was full of hardships Malnutrition, poor housing conditions and constant worry about her husband had a disastrous effect on Maria's health The children, too, were sickly, only one of their three sons surviving

A conference of the Workers' Federation of Chile was held at Santiago in 1922, and Galo Gonzalez was among its delegates At this conference Galo first met Luis Recabarren well known leader of the Chilean workers who a year earlier had been elected to parliament Galo was greatly impressed by Recabarren's speech in which he called for unity of working class ranks And when he returned to Valparaiso he bent his energies to unite the small union guilds of the transport workers into a single powerful organisation Recabarren came to

Valparaiso several times, to meet and talk with the workers' leaders Among Galo s close friends were the Communist workers Juan Ensino and Francisco Salas who had been through the tough school of class struggle at the nitrate mines Shortly afterwards a united transport workers' union was organised and Galo Gonzalez elected its general secretary

Late in 1922 as representative of the Communist Party of Chile Recabarren attended the 4th Congress of the Comintern On returning to Chile he organised Marxist Leninist propaganda on a much wider scale and did his utmost to make the truth about the Soviet Union known to the masses of Chile Recabarren used his speeches in parliament to counteract the spate of anti Soviet slander in his country In June 1924 the Chilean Chamber of Deputies was the scene of a five days debate between Recabarren and the reactionaries who sought to expel the "red agitator" from parliament Recabarren s closing speech ended with the words ' 'Peace, labour and freedom! and Workers of the world, unite!' are inscribed on the banner of the Communists "

The fiery speeches of the Chilean Communist Party leader, printed in all the newspapers, produced a strong impression They inspired the workers to wage an organised and politically conscious struggle In December 1924, Recabarren died under tragic circumstances His death was a great blow to the workers of Chile Galo Gonzalez was resolved to carry on the work of the man he regarded as his teacher and in 1925 he joined the Communist Party

Warm Heart and Cool Mind

Galo became a member of the Party at a grim hour In September 1924, the power in the land was seized by the military A bloody dictatorship which served the interests of United States monopoly capital was established by Colonel Ibañez Savage repressions dogged the steps of the Communists and all who dared oppose the regime The progressive press

was stifled and the Workers' Federation of Chile outlawed The police recruited great numbers of stool pigeons and informers and the carabineers, a special corps of the gendarmerie, was formed to hound the workers The most prominent Communists, comrades in arms of Recabarren, and thousands of militant trade unionists found themselves in prison and con centration camp

At this harrowing time ideological dissidence began in the ranks of the Communist Party, now compelled to work underground Manuel Hidalgo, one of the Communist Party leaders, advocated the liquidation of the illegal party and collaboration with the dictatorship There were equally harmful Left-wing deviations as well Isaias Iriarte, who became the Party's General Secretary by mishap, organised a sectarian group which wanted the Party to stop working in the legal trade unions and start an armed uprising This group advanced the adventurist slogan of "One Against All!" But the honour of the Party was upheld by its Valparaiso branch headed by Galo Gonzalez, Juan Chacon and Victor and Manuel Tapia They succeeded in reinstating the leading Party centre and reviving work in the trade unions Gradually the Workers' Federation of Chile was resuscitated Galo was elected to the leadership of the Federation and to the trade union coordinating council He established contact with the comrades of Recabarren and leaders of the Workers' Fe deration of Chile then in prison Galo Gonzalez possessed the amazing capacity of maintaining close touch with the masses while working underground He would never allow the workers to be involved in premature ventures which were doomed to failure, as he liked to say a Communist should have a warm heart and a cool head, able to take sober stock of a situation

In July 1931, a powerful wave of strikes and street demon strations led by the WF of C brought about the downfall of the Ibañez dictatorship A mutiny broke out spontaneously in the Navy The sailors demanded higher wages and an im

provement in their intolerable conditions of service Immediately Galo Gonzalez organized a solidarity movement at Valparaiso in support of the sailors mutiny A solidarity strike gripped the port and the whole city But the Communist Party, weakened by repressions, and with most of its leaders in exile, did not succeed in bringing a people's government into office The sailors' mutiny was put down In 1932, a petty bourgeois government came into office It declared Chile a Socialist Republic and passed a number of progressive decrees Although these decrees were far removed from true socialism, the mass movement initiated by the Communists to set up democratic municipal bodies terrified the bourgeoisie and the foreign monopolies Once again they engineered a military coup and began ruthless reprisals against the workers Galo Gonzalez, working at the time in the Central Committee Secretariat, was arrested He spent several months in prison and later was deported to La Mocha Island There he headed political studies among the exiles, training them for the struggles ahead He also led their fight against the abuses to which they were subjected under detention One of the forms it took was a four days' hunger strike in protest against the mistreatment of the prisoners and their terrible food

After Galo Gonzalez regained his freedom in June 1933, he helped convoke a conference of the Communist Party at which the further course for expediting the agrarian anti-imperialist revolution in Chile was mapped out

His revolutionary work had by this time won Galo Gonzalez recognition in the ranks of the world communist movement and in 1935 he was elected to the Comintern South-American Bureau

Fighting for the Popular Front

Even back in the twenties, during the high tide of the revolutionary movement, bands of young hooligans patterned on Mussolini's brown shirts harassed progressive organi-

sations and terrorised the population, during the world economic crisis of 1929 1932 fascist parties mushroomed up and contaminated the atmosphere in all the Latin Americas The call of the 7th Comintern Congress for a popular front against fascism and war was met enthusiastically by the peoples of South America Working vigorously towards that end, the Communists of Chile succeeded in organising a Popular Front in their country Their initiative won support from the Socialists as well as some of the petty bourgeois and bourgeois parties The heroic resistance of the Spanish people to fascism gave further impetus to the anti fascist movement

Galo Gonzalez and his fellow Communists, Elias Laferte and Barra Silva, travelled to the Soviet Union to attend the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1937 Galo had long dreamed of visiting the land about which he had read eagerly to his fellow miners the first newspaper reports back in 1917 He saw the Dnieper Power Station, the Moskva Volga Canal and was shown around many plants With his own eyes he witnessed the great courage of the Soviet people who in the face of tremendous odds, amidst a hostile capitalist encirclement, were building a new socialist society And the Chilean Communist was struck by the grandeur of their efforts Talks with Georgi Dimitrov helped the Chilean delegates to understand how to carry into life the line of the 7th Comintern Congress

In 1938, on the crest of the anti fascist liberation movement, a government of the Popular Front came into office with a programme of democratic reforms Although it represented a bloc of the national bourgeoisie with the workers under the political leadership of the bourgeoisie, the coming into power of such a government was a major victory for the working people

Many difficulties beset the Communist Party in preserving and consolidating the Popular Front Sometimes it had to make concessions to the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie groups in order to prevent resurgence of the reaction Upon the

outbreak of the Second World War, the Communist Party urged the people to unite against the danger of fascism The people of Chile breathlessly followed the heroic war of the Soviet people against the Hitlerite hordes On the initiative of the Communist Party, the For Victory Union, an organisation to render help to the peoples fighting against fascism, was formed The workers of Chile gladly donated one and even two days' wages and the peasants part of their harvest to help their brothers on the other side of the globe rout the fascist vandals

The ranks of the Communist Party swelled The Party scored important victories in the elections to parliament and the municipal bodies The gains, however, made some of the members succumb to harmful illusions The opportunistic "theories" of national and class harmony, cooperation of labour and capital and the unity of socialism and capitalism in the post war world gained currency The strife hardened nucleus of the Chilean Communists including Galo Gonzalez vigorously combated these reformist trends At a plenary meeting of the Central Committee Galo Gonzalez put the question of intensifying Marxist Leninist propaganda and stres sed the role of the Party press in achieving this end He urged that the communist newspaper *El Siglo* be turned into "a canon of big calibre" in the fight against imperialism and the oligarchy, for the needs of the masses and the unity of the working class He gave a great deal of his time to the organisation of Party schools

Exceedingly modest in his habits, Galo Gonzalez and his family lived in a small house in a railway workers' neighbourhood The Party time and again proposed to include Gonzalez in its list of candidates for parliamentary deputy or senator, but he invariably refused saying that he could do more good at his customary organisational work than in parliament He travelled the length and breadth of the country, consolidating Party units, canvassing for members and improving the organisation of Party education

At the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Chile, held on December 8, 1945, the revisionist tendencies were severely condemned The resolution adopted at this Congress stressed the necessity of improving the theoretical grounding of all Party members and educating them in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist principles The Congress elected a new Party leadership including Ricardo Fonseca, editor of *El Siglo*, the Party daily In October 1946, Fonseca became General Secretary of the Central Committee As in the trying period of the early thirties, Galo Gonzalez was made organisational secretary

The strengthening of the Party's ranks and its growing prestige compelled Gonzalez Videla, who was elected Chile's president in 1946, to include three Communists in his cabinet The new communist ministers introduced a system of monthly reports on their activities to the electorate which created a very good impression At the municipal elections in April 1947 the Communist Party was among the parties which polled the largest number of votes Fourteen Communist governors, ten *alcaldos* (city mayors) and hundreds of municipal councillors came into office This was a striking illustration of the Party's influence, its deep roots in the masses and of the democratisation of political life under its impact

What was now happening in Chile was a virtual nightmare to the North American imperialists and the internal reactionaries The United States government, having just started its "cold war" against the Soviet Union and savage witch hunt against the American Communists, now induced Gonzalez Videla to follow in its footsteps In April 1947, the Communists were expelled from the cabinet and the following year the reactionaries pushed through parliament a law mockingly called "In Defence of Democratic Institutions" which was invoked to ban the activities of the Communist Party, trade unions and other progressive public organisations A new period set in for the Communist Party, a period of exceedingly conspiratorial underground work At this crucial hour, the

Party's General Secretary, Ricardo Fonseca, fell gravely ill and recommended Galo Gonzalez Dias as his successor His long years of experience as a Party functionary, his first-hand knowledge of the conditions of life and struggle of different classes as well as his command of conspiratorial techniques made him a very suitable candidate The overwhelming responsibility for the destinies of the Party and working class now rested on his shoulders

Steadfastness and Courage

The first five years of the Party's underground work were singularly trying ones The prisons were full of workers Thousands of Communists, Socialists and non party people rotted in concentration camps As in the early thirties, the arrested were plied with questions on the whereabouts of Galo Gonzalez The police wore their shoes out trying to track him down and put him behind bars in order to behead the Communist Party And all along Galo Gonzalez was right there among the people A masterhand at the art of conspira cy, he kept changing his name and whereabouts and giving his pursuers the slip The way he evaded his pursuers was amaz ing It was even claimed time and again by the bourgeois press that no such person existed, that he was a myth invented by the Communists to boost their prestige The workers, however, had no doubts about the existence of Galo Gonza lez Dias, they knew that he was among them

Don Alberto, as Gonzalez was then called, strove assid uously to maintain unity in the Party ranks and uphold its ideological and organisational principles But there were people in the Party whose spirit quailed and who lost faith in the powers of the Chilean proletariat Especially danger ous was the "Left" group headed by Luis Reinoso, then the Central Committee's secretary for organisational questions, who was the exact opposite of Gonzalez His lust for power, arrogance, distrust of his comrades and disposition to live

beyond his means led him to take the road of adventurism Instead of organising the masses, he urged the Party to set up armed detachments to commit terrorist and diversionist acts and bring off putsches Taking advantage of the absence of open meetings he sought to replace politically conscious discipline by blind submission to those in higher positions and set one group of Communists against another Reinoso and his fellow adventurists did all they could to discredit Galo Gonzalez whom they dubbed a conciliator The policy of a united front with the Socialists and all anti imperialist bourgeois elements was branded by Reinoso and his confederates as "reformism" They went so far as to ridicule the efforts of the Communists to unite the masses under the slogan of the fight for peace and spoke contemptuously of proletarian internationalism Reinoso masked his true face and operated surreptitiously through his followers The Leftist opportu nists did the Party a lot of harm but in the long run were exposed and Reinoso was expelled from the Party

Owing to the efforts of Galo Gonzalez, Elias Laferte, Luis Corvalan and other leaders of the working class, unity of action between the Communists and Socialists was attained In 1952, a popular front, the union of all patriotic and anti-imperialist forces which subsequently developed into the powerful Popular Action Front, came into being in Chile This struggle for working class unity culminated despite the prohibitive laws in the organisation of the United Trade Union Centre of Chilean Workers on the initiative of the Communist Party

The working class responded vigorously to the call of the Communists for militant mass action A general politi cal strike broke out in the country in May 1954 with more than 700 000 persons taking part The strike led to drastic changes in the balance of political forces and raised the fighting spirit of the proletariat It consolidated the progressive organisations and promoted the legalisation of the United Workers Trade Union Centre

The 10th Congress of the Communist Party of Chile was held in April 1956 in conditions of utmost secrecy Resolutions adopted at this Congress pointed out that the international situation was exceedingly favourable to the national liberation struggle They also stressed the historical significance of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which gave a profound analysis of the processes at work in the world revolutionary movement and made a notable contribution to the development of Marxist Leninist theory The political line which the Communist Party of Chile was to pursue in the ensuing period was based on the principles set forth at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, the possibility of averting war in the modern era, broader possibilities for the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, the fight against the personality cult The Party programme adopted at the 10th Congress outlined the tasks of the proletariat's struggle for the implementation of the democratic national liberation revolution as a step towards socialism in Chile

A report on the work of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was made by Galo Gonzalez In replying to the venomous attacks of the reactionaries clamouring that the Chilean Communists took their orders from Moscow, he declared "We shall take no notice of these cries Our Party today, as in the past, is guided by its own decisions alone Its ideology, however, is Marxism Leninism "

Miru Mir

Work in the underground under constant peril of arrest put Galo Gonzalez under a great spiritual and physical strain For five years he had to live away from his family His wife paid rare visits to him furtively and at great risk This brave woman and Guillermo, their son, were kept under police surveillance Many were the times they were summoned and

detained by the police who thought they could be intimidated into divulging the whereabouts of the General Secretary of the Communist Party—it would have been just as easy to make stones speak Guillermo was held in a concentration camp for several months During one of the interrogations when this revolutionary's son refused to reply to the provocational questions, his infuriated examiner cried 'Wait till we put you through the third degree, you ll sing a different tune then And now will you name the Communists you know?"

"I know my father only," Guillermo replied

Galo Gonzalez had every right to be proud of his wife and son

The years were beginning to tell on Galo Gonzalez The strength of the man who had worked for fifteen years as a ste vedore and never known fatigue was at an ebb An old liver condition, aggravated by irregular habits of life, was giving him constant pain The Party decided that its leader needed a cure Between 1954 and 1957, Galo Gonzalez made two trips to the Soviet Union for treatment For one so well known, whose very existence was illegal, to go abroad was an excee dingly risky undertaking But Galo's remarkable flair for con spiracy, cool headedness and resourcefulness enabled him to slip out of the country unrecognised each time

With a joyful heart Galo Gonzalez witnessed the head way made by the Soviet people in the post war period As an ex miner, he was eager to visit the Donbas and meet the col liers The Soviet mines and their equipment, the safety and health systems impressed him immensely He admired the powerful hoisting machines, hewing combines and the modern fast moving cages He was deeply moved, too, by the cordial and warm reception accorded him by the miners As he look ed at their cosy cottages surrounded by orchards and gar dens he thought bitterly of the squalid life of the Chilean mi ners

"This is socialism! This is what socialism can accomp- lish!" Gonzalez exclaimed when he saw Volgograd rebuilt

from the ruins The summer was hot Near the house where he had put up there was a small lake of crystal clear water But he wanted to take a dip in the Volga to which ran a sloping road several kilometres long It was certainly inadvisable for an ailing man of sixty to cover any such distance on a sultry day But he was determined to take a plunge in the great river on the bank of the city where not so long ago the fate of all mankind had been decided The dissuasion of his interpreter was unavailing Galo had his way And having bathed in the Volga he returned in exuberant spirits

Everywhere on the roadsides in the Soviet Union Galo Gonzalez noticed the Russian words *Miru mir* (Peace to the world) traced in big letters They flashed at him, too, from the red background of large poster stands It delighted him to learn that the Russian word *mir* had two meanings—"peace" and "world"—and he liked the catchy slogan all the more for it

'The Soviet Union which is a country of peace," said Gonzalez, "wants peace to triumph in all the world "

On his walks in the park at Kislovodsk, Galo Gonzalez would often salute the promenaders with the words *Miru mir* This greeting, surprising nobody, won him many answering smiles His parting words to the comrades who saw him off at the aerodrome were *Miru mir!*

In the Soviet policy of peace and peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems Galo Gonzalez saw the embodiment of the aspirations of working people the world over, and the mainstay of proletarian internationalism The simple slogan *Miru mir!* was to him a sign of the age, the great age of the transition from capitalism to communism

Towards the end of Galo Gonzalez' life the long and heroic struggle of the Communist Party of Chile under his leadership bore fruit the ill starred law "In Defence of Democratic Institutions" on the basis of which the Communist Party was outlawed in 1948 was no longer enforced The funeral

of the General Secretary of the Communist Party was a striking illustration of the immense popularity he enjoyed in the land and of the Party's prestige More than 20 000 working people of Santiago came to the funeral to pay their last respects to the leader of Chile's Communists It was a remarkable funeral procession with revolutionary songs instead of dirges floating in the air Never before did the "Internationale', great hymn of the proletariat, resound with such power and appeal as on that day The funeral was turned into a mass political demonstration At the head of the procession beside Maria, the widow of the dead man and true partner of his long wanderings who had shared with him all the trials and tribulations of his Party life, walked the best men of Chile Among them was Elias Laferte veteran of the working class movement and Chairman of the Communist Party, Pablo Neruda the Communist poet, and the Socialist Salvador Allende who was running for the presidency

Over the grave of Galo Gonzalez, Luis Corvalan, who succeeded him as General Secretary of the Communist Party, speaking in behalf of all the working people and the entire Chilean population, declared "From now on once and for all there is to be an end to the illegal status of the Communist Party "

Ten days after the death of Galo Gonzalez, on March 18, 1959, Chile s Chamber of Deputies held a special memorial session in his honour And shortly afterwards the chamber unanimously adopted a resolution on the repeal of the "In Defence of Democratic Institutions" law The same resolution was carried at the Senate In August, Chile's president sanctioned the annulment of this law which had caused untold grief and suffering to the working class of Chile The party of the working class was now able to carry on its activities unhindered How hard Galo Gonzalez had worked all his life for that victory! It was a summing up of his entire life, the noblest monument that could be erected to this true son of the Chilean people

Marcel Cachin

Marcel Cachin

I am preparing the way for the singing morrow No doubt it is because Marcel Cachin has been my good teacher that I feel myself strong enough to face death Farewell and long live France'

Gabriel Peri

The 18th Congress of the French Socialist Party which was destined to be a landmark in the history of the French proletariat opened on December 25, 1920, in the ancient town of Tours

Hastily the Manege was prepared for the Congress The arrangements in its vast hall were simple a platform of crude planks, metal collapsible tables and chairs hired for the occasion, portraits of Jaures, and two big streamers which read "The Emancipation of the Toilers Is the Affair of the Toilers Themselves" and "Workers of the World, Unite!"

The 285 delegates with 4,575 mandates were to discuss a cardinal question—the affiliation of the French Socialist Party to the Communist (Third) International What their decision would be was in point of fact a foregone conclusion The Socialist Party had already decided at its Strassbourg

Congress in February 1920 to break with the bankrupt Second International And the Party branch meeting following the Congress made it clear that the majority of the Socialist Party membership favoured adhesion to the Third International, recognising it as a genuinely revolutionary Marxist international workingmen's alliance and true champion of the class interests of the workers of the whole world

A question that troubled the delegates at Tours was what stand the socialist minority of Blum, Renaudel, Samba and their followers would take under the circumstances The principle of Party democracy and the interests of the working class demanded that they submit to the will of the majority Would they ignore the interests of the Party, the workers, the supreme interests of socialism and precipitate a cleavage in the socialist ranks?

Before the decisive debates began, delegates from the Party branches, from the federation of the departments of Nord, Pas-de Calais, Bouche du-Rhone, Rhone, Seine and Cher, took the floor The majority spoke for affiliation to the Third International or, as they simply put it, "for Cachin's resolution"

In those days of great tension the gaze of the delegates often rested on the man who had framed the resolution, one of the leaders of the socialist majority advocating affiliation to the Third International To them this man of medium height with black moustache and deep, kindly eyes was a familiar figure Close associate of Jaures and a recognised leader of the French Socialists, Marcel Cachin enjoyed the high esteem and affection of the Party rank and file, its militants and all progressive workers of France He was one of the few French Socialists to have visited the new Russia, twice in fact, and as a guest of the Bolsheviks to have had the good fortune of speaking with Lenin The delegates now looked forward to Cachin's speech with the most eager interest

Cachin walked slowly to the speaker's stand with the

firm and confident step of a man of fifty who had a hard-fought, honest and brave life behind him The words of his famous speech burst out passionate and fiery upon the silence of the hall

His ardent and sincere appeal to the delegates to join the Communist International met with thunderous applause In vain did Cachin's opponents later seek to efface the impression of his speech, in vain did they endeavour to veer the Congress to the right The majority of the delegates now turned away from Paul Fore, Leon Blum and the others who had forgotten the great ideals of Marxism and proletarian internationalism The results of the vote confirmed the true mood of the overwhelming majority of the French Socialists more than three thousand mandates were cast for adhesion to the Third International

When these figures were announced the singing of the "Internationale" filled the hall On that day, December 29, 1920, the French Communist Party, great Party of the French workers and proud contingent of the international working class movement, was born And Marcel Cachin, along with other staunch fighters for the workers' cause, assisted at its birth

Joining the Working-Class Movement

Marcel Cachin was one and a half years old when the deeds of the heroes and martyrs of the Paris Commune shook the world He was getting on for 89 when he made his last stirring speech at a meeting in Paris celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Great October Revolution

Cachin was born on September 20, 1869, in the town of Pampol in Brittany To his last days he kept in touch with and visited his townsmen The peasants, sailors and fishermen of Brittany, with whom he could freely converse in their native tongue, affectionately called him "Our Papa Marcel"

The ways that lead people to join the working class movement are different Marcel Cachin came to the movement in his own way It was in 1891 Early that year, as he himself later recalled, politics were remote from his mind He was then an able and promising student of philosophy at the University of Bordeaux But when news reached him of the bloody outrage at Fourmies, a small town in the north of France where government troops shot down a peaceful May Day demonstration of textile workers, Cachin, like most honest Frenchmen, was shocked to the depths of his soul A meeting of protest was called at Bordeaux It was addressed by Jules Guesde, a veteran of the Paris Commune and an eminent French Socialist

Marcel Cachin had never before attended political meetings A feeling of indignation, a desire to know the truth and to fight against evil brought him to this meeting He left it a different man "From that day on,' Cachin recalled, "my views on life completely changed and I was at once drawn into the struggle for socialism "

Marcel Cachin joined the French Workers' Party, headed by Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue, late in 1891 and immediately became one of its active members In September 1892, this Party held a congress at Marseilles to discuss the agrarian problem Cachin submitted a letter to the Congress leadership on the position of the peasants in Brittany This was his first contribution to the fight for the interests of the rural proletariat

After graduating from the University of Bordeaux, Cachin taught philosophy for many years

In the late nineties he became secretary of a branch of the Workers' Party, later editor of the newspapers *Socialist Problems* and *The Gironde Socialist* and, finally, secretary of the federal party organisation of the department of Gironde and deputy mayor of Bordeaux

In August 1904, the workers of Gironde delegated him to the Congress of the Second International at Amsterdam where

he first met such leaders of the international socialist movement as Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, Bebel and Plekhanov He also represented the department of Gironde at the Congress of French Socialists held in Paris in April 1905 At this Congress the United Socialist Party, in which he was to play such a prominent role, was founded The following year, when a socialist mass meeting was called at Baissier, Jules Guesde asked him to make a speech in his stead The same year, on Guesde s recommendation, Marcel Cachin took over the Socialist Party s propaganda work, for the next six years travelling widely in France, organising socialist meetings, coming in contact and talking with thousands of people

In 1912, he was elected to the municipal council of Paris and to the council of the Seine department He now gave all his energy to bettering the conditions of the workers of Paris, devoting special attention to the labour and organisation of the city transport workers His popularity grew and he was soon asked by the Paris transport workers to head their union which had split up as a result of quibbling among its leadership He accepted the post and was able within a short time to restore unity in its ranks For six years, notwithstanding his many other duties, he headed the French Transport Workers' Union and boldly defended the interests of its members In 1916 on the outbreak of the tramway workers' strike at the height of the war, Cachin brought a deputation of the strikers' wives to the Ministry of the Interior, making the government grant the workers a wage increase

Throughout those years Cachin lived the hard, strenuous life of a Party leader, a publicist and revolutionary In 1912, Cachin became editor of *l Humanite*, replacing Paul Lafargue In 1913, he presided over the Inauguration Congress of the French Socialist Youth League and in the same year attended the famous Congress of the Second International at Basle which called upon all Socialists to prevent the outbreak of war and solemnly declared that workers considered

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it a crime to shoot each other Alas, when the world war broke out, these vows were forgotten Only the Party of Lenin remained true to the cause of proletarian internationalism and peace

In the spring of 1914, the workers of Paris elected Cachin to the Chamber of Deputies in which he sat continuously from that time forward In the latter years of his life as the eldest of the French deputies he opened the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies

Then came the troublous summer of 1914 Jaures, whom Cachin greatly respected although he did not entirely share his views, was treacherously murdered on July 31 Cachin could hardly believe his ears—only an hour and a half before his death he had pressed Jaures' hand and bid him good bye till morning "Jaures has been killed!" wrote Cachin "Jaures died for peace! War is at our doorstep "

War was indeed at France's doorstep, at the doorstep of the whole world Ahead were ordeals and world shaking events

The First Trip to the Land of Victorious Revolution

The First World War had been raging for three years It had taken a toll of millions of lives, devastated cities and villages Europe lay in smouldering ashes There seemed no end to the madness of war The French Socialist Party called a congress in August 1916 When Cachin said at this congress that the war was bound to lead to a revolution in Russia people laughed up their sleeves In February 1917, the exciting news reached France that the tsarist rule had been overthrown by the Russian people and replaced by a bourgeois provisional government wielding far less influence than the Soviets established by the revolutionary workers and soldiers

The French Chamber of Deputies delegated members of

its Committee on Foreign Affairs to go to Russia and verify the reports This trying mission at a time of war was entrusted to Marcel Cachin and two other deputies, Marius Moutet and Ernest Lafont

They set out on their long and perilous journey to Rus sia at the end of March 1917 First they went to Aberdeen and then via Bergen and Stockholm reached the river which marks the border between Sweden and Finland The delegates crossed the ice-bound river on foot Cachin, veteran Socialist fighter, almost wept for joy when he saw the red flag over the railway station at Torneo

Cachin spent almost a month in Russia, visiting Petro grad, Moscow, Minsk and Pskov, speaking with workers, soldiers, peasants and members of the revolutionary Soviets He was keenly interested in every phase of life in revolution- ary Russia, trying to grasp the true mood and needs of the insurgent people He was present at the May Day demonstra- tion in Moscow and saw for himself a great nation squaring its mighty shoulders The French Socialist went to the front to speak with the men and officers of the Russian army One of the army generals frankly told him that it was no longer possible to keep the Russian soldier in the war At an army meeting Cachin heard the soldiers declare that they would no longer engage in the senseless bloodshed It was clear to this envoy of the French workers that the people of Rus- sia longed for peace The Kerensky government and the groups supporting it alone wished to go on with the war But it was no use They could not induce the nation to continue fighting in the fratricidal imperialist war

Marcel could see the enormous, ever growing influence of the Bolsheviks on the masses Lenin was back in Russia He was leading the people to the Socialist Revolution that triumphed in November 1917 The first decree of that Revolu tion, of the Russian Communists, was the decree on peace And this was followed by the Bolsheviks handing over the factories to the workers and the land to the peasants

The October Revolution accomplished what the heroes of the Paris Commune could not do Paul Vaillant Couturier, who was Cachin s friend wrote in verse

Do you hear the thunder loud?
Thunder of the Battleship *Aurora*?
Its guns are trained upon the Neva
And firing at the Winter Palace
Petersburg s in the hands of the Reds
The Russian worker, peasant and soldier
Won back its red to the Commune
Won back to the Commune its red colour

On returning to France, Cachin reported to the Socialist Party on what he had seen in Russia Enthusiastically he urged support of the Russian Revolution In an article for *l'Humanite* he wrote

'For three years France was the ally of the tsarist government Surely she will not refuse to honestly cooperate with the Russian Revolution? Their national interests bid the French Republicans and Socialists to put their trust in the great democracy of the North Clearly that is our duty In this great global combat we must extend our trust and ardent sympathies to the Russian Revolution We are with that Revolution in the name of revolutionary France!'

Unforgettable Meetings with Lenin

In the name of a free, revolutionary and happy France, in the name of socialism, Marcel Cachin called for the support of the young Soviet Republic This made him rise even more highly in the esteem of those members of the French Socialist Party who remained true to Marxism At the Party Congress in October 1918, Cachin was appointed political director of *l'Humanite*, replacing Renaudel who hated the Russian Revolution

Marcel Cachin in the twenties

In 1920, at the Strassbourg Congress of the Socialist Party, which adopted a resolution to withdraw from the Second International, Marcel was again asked to go to Russia, this time with Frossard, then secretary of the Party, and discuss with the Bolsheviks the terms under which the French Socialist Party could join the Third (Communist) International

Once again he and his comrades set off on a long journey, travelling by boat through mined waters from Stettin to Helsingfors, and then on to Revel From Revel going by train through Petrograd, the delegates arrived in Moscow

Cachin attended a meeting of the Moscow Soviet at the Bolshoi Theatre in June 1920 Strong words were used by the speakers against France for joining the imperialist powers in their attempt to crush the young Soviet Republic But it was bourgeois France that was so bitterly attacked When Marcel Cachin mounted the rostrum, the entire audience rose and hailed him as the envoy of the France of the workers, a friendly France advocating the defence of revolutionary Russia

Shortly afterwards at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to which he was invited, Cachin had his first opportunity to talk with Lenin "I have been looking forward to meeting you," Lenin said simply In a long conversation Lenin spoke of the situation in France and in the French Socialist Party and discussed the conditions on which it could join the Third International

"It would be idle to ask ourselves whether the revolution will come now or later," said Lenin 'Our sole task is to educate the proletarians of all countries so that events should not take them unawares, so that when the moment arrives, they can take control over these events "

His talk with Lenin made an unforgettable impression on Cachin He had come to Russia as a delegate of the French Socialist Party to find out the terms for his party's affiliation

M Thorez P Vaillant Couturier M Cachin Camelina a Paris Commune veteran and others at the Wall of Communards Pere Lachaise 1926

to the Communist International He now felt that his task must not end there and after his conversation with Lenin he sent a telegram to the National Council of the French Socialist Party requesting permission to attend the Second Congress of the Comintern as a delegate without a mandate He received a favourable reply

He had twenty days at his disposal before the Congress was to begin and he used the time for a tour of Russia Early in July a train took him to Nizhni-Novgorod There he boarded a boat and sailed down the Volga to Kazan and then on to Simbirsk, Lenin's birthplace, and to Samara and Saratov By train he journeyed to Tambov and a short while later visited Tula, centre of Russia's munition industry, and then the textile mills of Ivanovo Vosnesensk, a city noted for its

revolutionary traditions This last visit brought back memo ries of the demonstration of textile workers at Fourmies, that event of long ago which had left a deep imprint on the soul of the young Cachin and had actually brought him into the ranks of fighters for socialism

Cachin covered more than three thousand kilometres of Russian territory, acquainting himself with the magni ficent reality of the early revolutionary years in Russia "The entire working class of Russia," ran a wire Marcel Cachin sent to Paris, "is inspired by profound faith in the triumph of their cause and confidence in victory The working people spoke to us of the dire hardships they have had to endure for three years now the unheated homes, the starvation rations The governments of the Entente have reduced them to penury The workers of Russia ask us how the proletarians of the Western countries, the French proletariat among them, could countenance this infamous policy for three years running "

In July 1920, Marcel Cachin sent a second telegram to the French Socialist Party urging it to join the Third International

Together with Rosthmer, Raymond Lefevre, Vergeat and Lepetit, who had come from France, Cachin attended the Se cond Congress of the Comintern The leaders of the Third International formulated the main requirements of admittance to the Communist International and submitted them for consideration to the delegates It was stressed that while these requirements applied to all Communist Parties allowan ces were to be made for the specific conditions in which the workers of different countries were compelled to wage their struggle

Before leaving for France, Cachin had a second conver sation with Lenin who received him in his modest study in the Kremlin Lenin spoke warmly of the French sailors who had mutinied against the imperialists in the Black Sea and re fused to have a hand in crushing the revolution He told Ca

Marcel Cachin and other delegates of the French Communist Party to the VI Comint ern Congress in 1928

chin that the French government, which backed the white guard Poles against Soviet Russia, was shipping arms to War saw and had sent General Weygand and officers of the gener al staff there Lenin asked Cachin to convey the gratitude of the working people of Soviet Russia to the dockers of Dun kirk who refused to load the guns which were being sent to Poland Lenin said that with the rout of the imperialists in Poland there would follow a period of comparative peace and Russia will "use this peace to reconstruct our exhausted country and to make it invincible"

In parting Lenin heartily shook Cachin's hand, saying that "the French proletariat with its energy and wonderful

revolutionary traditions will organise, I am certain of it, a powerful Communist Party"

For the rest of his life Cachin remembered these kind parting words of a great friend of the French working people who was well conversant with their needs, their life and their battles, and sincerely wished them happiness

Organising and Building up of the French Communist Party

When Cachin returned to France he shared his impressions of Russia with the French workers A mass meeting was called at the Paris circus by the Secretariat of the French Socialist Party Huge crowds of Parisians were already throng ing at the doors when Cachin arrived Thousands of people tried to squeeze into the hall to hear his eye witness account of Russia There were men and women, young workers and grey-haired veterans of the Paris Commune "Have you seen the Bolsheviks?" they shouted "How are they getting on in Russia?" Cachin's glowing account, the tumultuous applause, the cheering crowds and loud swell of the "Internatio nale" all reflected the warm sympathy of Paris working class for the new Soviet Republic

The same enthusiastic response awaited Marcel Cachin in other parts of France, too He visited Lyons, Marseilles, Rouen, Havre, Bordeaux and Toulouse from August to De cember 1920, addressing scores of meetings to which thou sands of people flocked Cachin would sometimes speak at several meetings in a single day and then sit down at night to write an article for *l'Humanite* His appeal to join the Communist International, too, met everywhere with the approval of the French workers and the majority of the Socialists who wished to fight in the ranks of the Communist Internatio nal for the great ideals of Marxism and a happy future for France

In his historic speech at the Tours Congress Marcel Cachin had in effect mapped out the course to be followed by the French Communist Party He urged the French Socialists to break with a past which had but recently led to world carnage and devastation He called for the establishment of a genuine democratic regime of the workers and peasants to whom by right belonged the power and the wealth of the land, for the emancipation of the oppressed toiling people, the liberation of the colonial peoples languishing under the heel of imperialism, for an all out effort in alliance with Soviet Russia to end imperialist wars

The fearless and consistent stand taken by Cachin and his comrades, who had the support of the majority of the Socialists, secured the victory of the genuinely Marxist, internationalist and patriotic forces at the Tours Congress where the French Communist Party came into being Its foundation was the logical outcome of the development of the French working class movement and of the impact of the October Revolution on the world proletariat

The initial steps of the newly founded French Communist Party were far from smooth The Party was compelled to wage a tireless struggle against reactionaries who did not cease their rabid attacks against the Communists It was also necessary to combat enemies inside the Party, renegades and traitors of every brand, among them Frossard, the Party's former secretary, who had betrayed the cause of the proletariat and swung over to the side of the bourgeoisie A member of the C P F 's Central Committee and Political Bureau from their very inception, Marcel Cachin gave all the vigour of his nature and towering gifts to the work of consolidating the Party and training its young members in the spirit of Marxism, proletarian internationalism and love for their country

Early in 1923, the Communist Party was confronted by a grave challenge The Poincare government began the occupation of the Ruhr, eighty thousand soldiers were dispatched

to this industrial area of Germany to ensure domination and fabulous profits for the French imperialists

Marcel Cachin and other leaders of the French Communist Party met this political challenge by a bold decision On the day the French army set foot in Essen Marcel Cachin, Gaston Monmousseau, Pierre Semard, Gabriel Peri and Richetta or ganised a mass meeting there in conjunction with Clara Zet kin, thus demonstrating the solidarity of the workers of France and Germany

This courageous step infuriated the imperialists And as soon as Cachin and his comrades returned to Paris, they were thrown into the Sante prison by the Poincare government on a charge of conspiracy against the security of the State The proletariat of France and other countries wholehear tedly supported Cachin and his comrades A letter arrived for the prisoners from the Comintern praising highly their action as an important service to the French and international work-ing class movement "You have saved the honour of the French proletariat," ran the letter "Your courageous conduct has won the appreciation of Communists in all lands From now on your every step will be followed with interest by progres-sive workers the world over "

In 1925, Cachin was sentenced to two years' imprisonment —this time for raising his powerful voice against the war of the French colonialists in Morocco Maurice Thorez who headed the Committee of Action for stopping this war was convicted for the same "crime"

The Ruhr and Morocco are only two examples of Cachin's dedication to the noble cause of proletarian solidarity and internationalism And there were countless others! During the civil war in Spain Cachin did everything in his power to help the Spanish Republic in its fight against fascism Along with Maurice Thorez he appealed again and again to the lead ers of the Socialist International for joint action in defence of Republican Spain Unfortunately, the Right wing socia list leaders turned a deaf ear to the appeals and warnings

Marcel Cachin with his son and daughter.

of the Communists and went on with their ill-starred policy of "non interference"

By such tireless struggle and by constantly purging its ranks of opportunists and dogmatists of every ilk did the Communist Party of France grow and gain in strength And along with it were steeled its fighters and leaders Marcel Cachin, Paul Vaillant Couturier, Gaston Monmousseau, and such younger leaders of the French proletariat as Maurice Thorez, Waldeck Rochet, Jacques Duclos and many others

A friendship of long standing and mutual regard linked Marcel Cachin and Maurice Thorez, who became a member of the Central Committee in 1924 and General Secretary of the French Communist Party in 1930 Thorez recalled having first seen Cachin at Amiens in the early twenties They met afterwards at the Paris Congress of the French Communist Party in 1922 and subsequently at a meeting in Arras From then on they saw each other constantly at meetings, conferences, Plenary, Central Committee and Political Bureau sittings and also at each other's homes

Among Cachin's close friends were men prominent in French culture—Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, the painter Paul Signac A fighter and thinker, Marcel Cachin retained to the last his keen interest in the sciences, arts and literature, and himself wrote quite a lot of problems of culture His articles and speeches brimmed with optimism and zest for life

The Fight for Unity and Against War

In the thirties France and the Communist Party faced a new ordeal No sooner had the Hitlerites seized the reins of government in Germany than the French fascists, too, made a bid for power Dark clouds hung over the land

Never before was the need for unity so great Only the unity of the workers, of all democratic forces could save

France And the French Communist Party led the move ment for the amalgamation of all democrats and republicans, all who cherished the freedom and honour of their country

With might and main Marcel Cachin worked all his life to weld the forces of the working class In 1905, he helped to unite the French Socialists and found the Socialist Party In the historic year of 1920, when the French Socialist Party was taking the decision to join the Third International, he urged the minority to uphold the unity of the Party and avoid a split The crucial year of 1935 found him a man of 65 He was still hale and hearty, and had not lost his amazing ca pacity for work and his gifts as a public speaker Many peo ple still remember his stirring speeches of that period In them he invoked the Socialists and Communists to marshal their forces against reaction and fascism, and fight for the happi ness of the working people Addressing the 7th Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1935 he said "We must now more energetically than ever block the way to fascism We need allies in the struggle And such an ally is the Popular Front "

Cachin was the first Communist ever to be elected to the French Senate His election in 1935 was the prelude, as it were, to the victory of the Popular Front in 1936

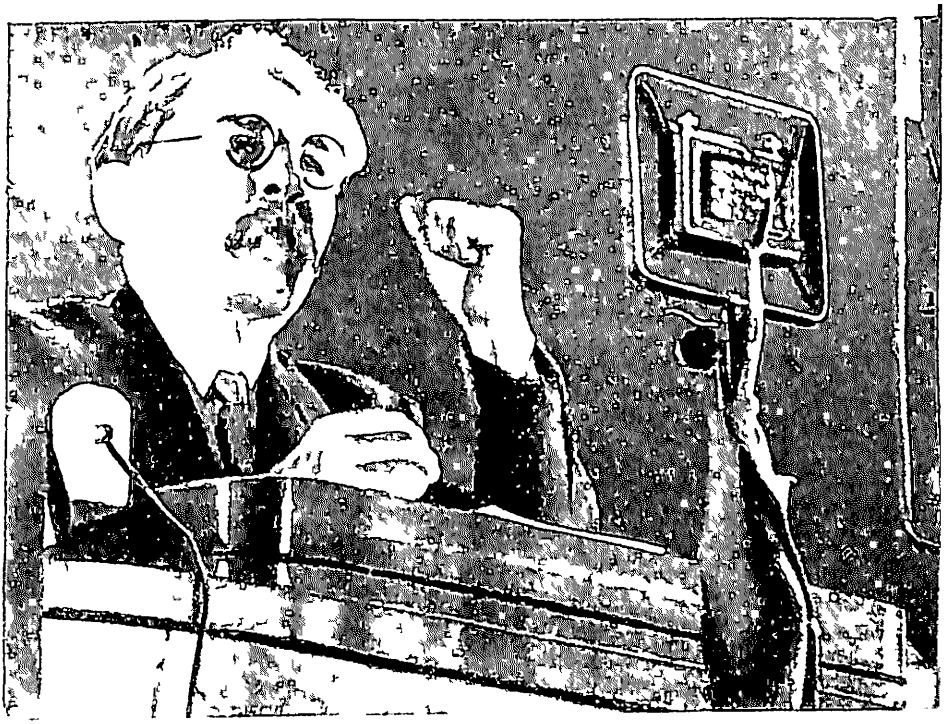
The emergence of the Popular Front was a major victory for the French working people It consummated the Communist Party's struggle for unity of action with the Socialists and other democrats

Cachin gave time and again warning of the approach of war He pointed to the danger in the columns of *l'Humanite*, in the Chamber of Deputies, from the rostrum of numerous conferences and peace rallies Speaking at the World Peace Congress in 1937, he said "The defence of peace is our com mon aim—it is the bond that links us, and we must spare no effort to preserve it unbroken "

The defence of peace is the bond that links us—how pertinent these words still are today!

However, the appeals of the Communists and their valiant struggle did not gain enough support and the reactionary forces were able to unleash war The Munich Pact paved the way for the Second World War And the reactionary rulers of France, instead of preparing to resist Hitler, directed their venom against the French Communists and other democrats In September 1939, even before mobilisation was announced, *l'Humanite* was closed down The Communist deputies were arrested in October of the same year Marcel Cachin, then seventy years old, came boldly to their defence Deprived of his seat in the Senate, he appeared in court to cheer and support his fellow Communists Florimond Bonte, one of the communist deputies on trial, related afterwards that when Cachin entered the courtroom all the defendants rose in token of gratitude and respect "In his person," wrote Bonte, 'we paid homage to a life of unswerving loyalty to the Communist Party, a life full of self sacrifice, homage to the French Communist Party which he so worthily represented "

Whereas the Munich appeasers had betrayed France, the French Communists and other patriots did not spare their lives to defend it The Communists were in the forefront of the fight for the liberty and independence of their people and their country 'Never will a great nation like ours be a nation of slaves," read the manifesto of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party signed by Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos and published in an illegal issue of *l Humanite* in the grim days of July 1940 Cachin, who was then over seventy, wrote for the underground *l Humanite* calling upon all Frenchmen to resist the Hitler invaders "All the French must fight to regain mastery of their land," he said in July 1943 "As for us, we have resolutely and irrevocably taken the road charted by the founders of communism The experience of life proves that there is no other way out for oppressed humanity "



Marcel Cachin speaking at the VII Comintern Congress 1935

The appeals of the leaders of the French Communist Party inspired all French patriots in their resistance to the fascist scum That is why as he faced execution Gabriel Peri's thoughts turned to his teacher Marcel Cachin, the example of whose noble life gave him the strength to face death unafraid

Cachin's post war articles and speeches were as before imbued with his zealous devotion to communism and the will to fight for the peace and happiness of his fellow men He exposed the aggressive nature of the Atlantic bloc and the compact between the French rulers and the Bonn revenge seekers He condemned colonial wars and the policy of atomic armament and ardently championed the true greatness of France "The people of France will never fight against the Soviet Union," he declared on September 4, 1949, at a fête of *l'Humanite*

in the Vencennes wood "Let those who rule in Paris and elsewhere heed this solemn warning! Let them heed the voice of Frenchmen, of the venerable comrades who taught us We are taking a vow to fight for democracy for progress, for a good life, for the peace of mankind, its most precious boon!"

To the last day of his life Cachin fought against colonial oppression He spoke up fearlessly for peace in Indo China and the freedom and independence of the Algerian people His declining years were as packed with work as ever Nothing, it seemed, could break this hearty octogenarian with the kind and merry twinkle in his eyes He remained an early riser so as to get more work done He never missed a day at his office on the Boulevard Poissonierre where he had worked for forty five years, thirty nine of them as editor of *l'Humanite*, militant newspaper of the French working class

It is told by a fellow townsman that one day he met "Papa Cachin" and tried to help him across the street upon which he received the smiling rebuke "There's no need, no need Don't think I'm an old man Believe me, I'll live to see socialism in our country too"

An indefatigable champion of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the world communist movement, Cachin rejoiced in every success scored by the forces of progress, in the growing might of the USSR and the other socialist countries One of the first Frenchmen to hail the Russian revolution he remained an advocate of Franco Soviet friendship to the end of his days In recognition of his long years and selfless activity towards strengthening friendship between the people of France and the USSR, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1959 awarded him the Order of Lenin on his 88th birthday Cachin could not hide his tears when he received the decoration "More than ever," he said with deep feeling, "I wish to express my growing admiration for the immortal cause of the 1917 Revolution More than ever I am convinced that its victory all over

Marcel Cachin with his daughter Marcelle and grand-children

the world is near More than ever I rejoice in having seen Lenin and gauged his genius, which has changed the face of the earth "

These words were in a way Cachin's last testament the brief summing up of his whole life Marcel Cachin died on the night of February 11, 1958, at the age of 88, in his little house at the Choisy le Roi which the French Communist Party has now converted into the Cachin Memorial Museum

The people of France turned out en masse to see their great countryman off on his last journey Marcel Cachin was buried at Pere Lachaise, at the Wall of Communards, beside Paul Vaillant Couturier, Henri Barbusse, Pierre Semard and other fighters for the freedom and glory of France

Every year many Parisians come to this wall to honour the memory of the heroes of the Paris Commune and their worthy heirs Every spring the working people of France put fresh flowers on their graves as a symbol of undying life

Ernst Thaelmann

Ernst Thaelmann

n Hamburg a son was born to Johann Thaelmann on April 16, 1886 The boy Ernst, went to work early first as a day labourer, then as furniture hauler, cart driver, dock worker and seaman

His growing political awareness brought him into the ranks of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1902 Two years later, Ernst joined the Hamburg Transport Workers Union

The fierce struggle then being waged by the workers of Hamburg against their capitalist exploiters exerted a potent revolutionising influence on the young worker It was no accident that Hamburg's representative in the Reichstag was August Bebel

Thaelmann often spoke at trade union meetings on behalf of the transport workers and against the union bureaucrats, who even then recognised in the critic attacking them a staunch rebel and revolutionary Ernst's comrades in the Party and the trade union admired his militancy He was repeatedly elected their delegate to the conferences and cong-

resses of the transport workers, and was made a Party functionary

At the age of 22, Thaelmann was called up for service in the army, and came to know the militaristic policy of the bourgeois state at first hand He saw the great danger inherent in its militarism and war preparations, and on his return to Hamburg from the army threw himself into the anti war movement When the First World War broke out, Ernst Thaelmann was among the far seeing representatives of the German proletariat who denounced the chauvinistic stand of the German Social Democratic leaders in casting their parliamentary votes for war credits and calling for defence of the bourgeois "fatherland" "The Red banner of the proletarian class struggle has been betrayed and trampled in the dust," was Thaelmann's comment on the war policy of the German Social Democratic Party

Soon after the beginning of the war, Thaelmann was called up for active service ahead of his time At the front, he did not discontinue his revolutionary propaganda, for which he was severely disciplined more than once

In the summer of 1917, he was given leave to go home Echoes of the revolution in Russia reached Germany, which was in turn shaken by its first major revolutionary acts Under the impact of the February Revolution in Russia, the German revolutionaries founded an Independent Social Democratic Party

Thaelmann immediately joined the new Party He and his Hamburg comrades formed its Left wing

Ernst Thaelmann enthusiastically hailed the Great October Socialist Revolution The proletarian revolution in Russia struck a deadly blow at the chauvinistic mood prevalent in Germany The masses of workers went into action over the heads of the Right Social Democratic leaders The mutiny of the Kiel seamen who on November 3, 1918, raised red flags on their warships marked the outbreak of the revolu-

tion in Germany Thaelmann took a most active part in it Defying the ban of the Social Democratic and trade union leaders, he armed and led Hamburg s revolutionary workers In the course of fierce struggle against the Right wing leadership of the German Social Democratic Party, and especially against the anti labour policies of the Rightist leaders of the Independent S D P G , Ernst Thaelmann rose to the stature of a real proletarian leader in Hamburg At the end of 1919, he became the chairman of the Hamburg organisation of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany

In 1920, Thaelmann was one of those who gave the initial impetus to the merger of the revolutionary wing of the In dependent S D P G and the German Communist Party found ed on December 30 1918, by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg from the 'Union of Spartacus Thanks to him and his comrades, 200,000 members of the Independent S D P G went over to the Communist Party Thaelmann was elected to its Central Counsel

In the summer of 1921, Thaelmann attended the 3rd Con gress of the Comintern and there met Lenin for the first time Lenin's scathing but businesslike and just criticism of the activities of the German Communist Party during the events of March 1921 in Germany,* in which Thaelmann had parti cipated personally, impressed him deeply He came back to his own country inspired by the decisions of the Congress and Lenin's high praise of the speech of the 'Hamburg dele gate", and also by all he had seen in the Soviet capital Armed with Lenin s arguments, he intensified his fight against the opportunists entrenched in the C P G leadership

The next congress of the C P G , held in Jena in August 1921, discussed the Party's tasks in the light of the lessons of the battles of March 1921 Thaelmann addressed the con-

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* Armed action of workers of Central Germany provoked by coun ter revolutionaries

gress with his characteristic simplicity, honesty and conviction He spoke of the mistakes of March and at this congress showed that he had grasped Lenin's perspicacious criticism by placing before it the question of winning the Social Democratic workers over to the Communist Party through the strategy of the united front The congress re elected him to the Central Committee of the C P G

Thaelmann s revolutionary activities gained him the burning hatred of the reaction On June 17, 1922, the Hamburg fascists belonging to the 'Konsul" secret organisation made an attempt on Thaelmann's life Fortunately, the bomb they planted in his flat exploded in his absence

The revolutionary situation in Germany was gaining momentum The class contradictions that rent the country were aggravated as a result of the occupation of the Ruhr by the French Army, in retaliation for Germany's failure to pay reparations Industrial output fell, unemployment rose, the value of the mark dropped, the strike movement spread

The following congress of the C P G met in Leipzig at the end of January and beginning of February 1923—the height of the revolutionary situation The revolutionary wing of the C P G , including E Thaelmann, W Pieck, C Zetkin, W Ulbricht, etc , challenged the Right wing opportunists led by Brandler and Thalheimer on the united front strategy and formation of workers' governments Brandler and Thalheimer opposed the formation of a united front of the working class from below and favoured an unprincipled agreement with the leaders of the Social Democratic Party in parliament Thaelmann saw the danger of Brandler s line for the German working class movement, and stressed that the bourgeoisie could not be defeated and victory assured by means of parliamentary debates and agreements, that victory could only be achieved by the consistent revolutionary struggle of the proletariat

After the Leipzig congress of the C P G , events developed with lightning speed By the end of the summer of 1923, the country resembled a seething cauldron In the middle of October workers' governments consisting of the "Left" Social Democrats, the Communists, and non party workers were formed in Saxony and Thuringia under pressure from the masses But the situation was not properly exploited towards development of the revolution The blame for that rests with the Social Democratic and trade union leaders who obstructed the proposed united proletarian front The cause of the proletarian revolution in Germany was under mined by the criminal policy of Brandler and Thalheimer, who held leading posts in the C P G Instead of prepar ing the proletariat for armed struggle, they pursued a policy which paralysed the revolutionary activity of the masses

The opportunistic policy of the Brandlerites met with growing disfavour in the lower rungs of the Party The Marit ime Region branch, led by E Thaelmann, was particularly active in its opposition to the Brandler course The Commun ists there called for the immediate transition to armed strug gle for the seizure of political power

The bourgeoisie were seriously alarmed by Thaelmann's calls to armed struggle and repeated their attempts to put him out of the way In the spring of 1923, the Hamburg fas cists again plotted to take his life But the Communists of the city got wind of the plot and kept close guard over him, thus foiling the fascists' attempts to perpetrate their dast ardly crime against the workers' leader

The workers of Hamburg did not take the defeat of the proletariat in Thuringia and Saxony lying down When the Reichswehr entered those regions, the workers replied by stoppages in the factories, at the docks, on shipboard Weigh ing the situation and the masses' readiness to fight, the Ham burg Party branch raised the red flag of revolution During the night of October 22, 1923, the Communists distributed

calls to armed action, and on October 23 all the workers of the city, old and young, and with them the women and children, gathered at the barricades

For three days and three nights, six thousand Reichswehr policemen and soldiers attacked the barricades erected by Hamburg's workers For three days and three nights, the Hamburg bourgeoisie shivered in their boots

The soul of the rising was the most popular man in Ham burg, the transport worker Ernst Thaelmann He personally directed the most important operations and the supply of arms and foodstuffs

However, the treachery of the S D P G leaders, and, in the C P G , the policy of capitulation followed by the Brand ler leadership which went back on its initial decision for armed action, made things very hard for the embattled pro letariat

By October 25 it was clear that the workers of Ham-burg, isolated as they were from the rest of the country, could not press the struggle with any hope of victory Thael mann ordered them to stop fighting The workers retreated in exemplary order, skilfully preserving the hard core of their revolutionary ranks

"The transport worker Ernst Thaelmann,' said Herman Matern, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Com mittee, C P G , 'has shown at this time of historic import ance for the German people that he has become a big leader of the German working class "

Thaelmann drew important conclusions from the Hamburg events The foremost of them was that for the working class to win, it had to have 'an iron strong, absolutely integrated, monolithically united and unconditionally disciplined party' All of Thaelmann s ingenuity, intelligence and energy were thenceforth dedicated to the development of such a party

The Party congress illegally held in Frankfurt am Main in April 1924 played a major role in turning the C P G into a genuine Marxist Leninist party of the new type At that

congress Thaelmann led the opposition to the opportunist Brandler Thalheimer grouping The opportunists were de feated and new men brought into its leading bodies—among them Ernst Thaelmann He was elected to the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the Party

The 5th Congress of the Comintern which met in Moscow during the summer of 1924 unanimously upheld Ernst Thael mann's line and condemned the opportunism of Brandler and Thalheimer With the help of the Comintern, the Ger man Communists and their Marxist-Leninist core overcame the resistance put up to the new Party line by the "ultra-Left" sectarians Ruth Fischer, Maslov and Urbans That "ultra Left" clique was heading the Communist Party towards isolation from the masses and hampering its work in the trade unions It was sharply criticised by Ernst Thaelmann, backed by the Comintern Thaelmann was elected the chairman of the Party in October 1925, and with Pieck, Ulbricht, Heckert and other prominent comrades formed the Leninist section of the Party's leadership The 11th Congress of the C P G in 1927 dealt the "ultra Lefts" a smashing defeat

On becoming the leader of the German Communists, Ernst Thaelmann focused his attention on the organisational and ideological consolidation of the Party Step by step he forged the monolithic unity of the vanguard of the German prole tariat He based the education of Germany's revolutionaries and entire working class on the theoretical works of Marx, Engels and Lenin and on the rich experience of the Bolshevik Party and socialist construction in the USSR At his suggestion the 11th Congress of the C P G passed a decision to publish the works of V I Lenin in the German language

"He has led the Party," said H Matern, "from a state of ambiguity, of Rightist and Leftist deviations, to the road of a united Party which stands firmly for the principles of Marx ism Leninism"

Thaelmann educated a cohort of German revolutionaries in the spirit of hatred for their class enemies and of ideological consistency and devotion to the proletarian cause 'To be a soldier of the revolution " he said, "is to retain unswerving loyalty to the cause, the kind of loyalty that can stand the test of life and death Only if we are steadfast and dependable of character and believe in our victory can we change our destiny and do our revolutionary duty, in fulfilment of the great historical mission which devolves upon us, and so ensure the ultimate triumph of real socialism "

So he taught the soldiers of the revolution Simultaneously, he went on with the structural reorganisation of the Party, in line with the political tasks then facing German Communists

He changed over from the territorial principle of Party organisation to primary Party units organised according to the production principle He also sought to free the Party of hangovers of Luxemburgism, which underestimated the role of the Party, exaggerated the significance of spontaneity, and misinterpreted the question of the allies of the working class After its reorganisation, the C P G drew closer to the workers, and its class basis was accordingly strengthened The reorganisation did much to transform the C P G into a mass proletarian party

"It was the historical contribution of Ernst Thaelmann," said W Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, "that he transformed the Party, which arose under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, into a revolutionary party of the masses "*

The leadership of the C P G under Thaelmann painstakingly built up the mass organisations of the proletariat, seeking new forms of organising the different sections of the working class, and winning over to the communist cause those

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* *Germany's Immortal Son*, Moscow 1963, p 28

Thaelmann and other delegates to the VI Congress of the Comintern in 1928

workers who still laboured under the influence of the reac tionary classes, the Social Democratic Party, and the reform ist General Amalgamation of German Trade Unions

Thaelmann was an active unionist and asked the same of every Communist He initiated the reorganisation of the trade unions aligned with the C P G and with the revolutionary trade union opposition The effect that reorganisation had in strengthening trade union unity was reflected among other things in the success of many strikes called in 1928 and 1929

The reaction retaliated for the growing influence of the Communist Party in the unions by baiting and hounding the Communists and driving them out of the unions In 1931, it

forced the reformist union leadership to expel Thaelmann from the Transport Workers' Union on the grounds that he was the chairman of the C P G and supported the revolutionary trade union opposition And only two years earlier the Hamburg Transport Workers' Union had presented him with a "certificate of honour" in recognition of his outstanding services and devotion to the union!

A big role in the formation of a united working class front belongs to the Alliance of the Red Front, one of the most popular mass organisations of the German working class in the twenties The Alliance of the Red Front arose in 1924, its organiser and the permanent chairman of its staff was Ernst Thaelmann, who enjoyed unquestioning authority among its membership The watchword of that famous militant organisation of proletarian soldiers was "Rot Front" and these words were accompanied by the upraised clenched fist, symbolising the irreconcilable struggle of millions of workers against reaction and fascism, against capitalist exploitation and imperialist war

The Alliance of the Red Front soon became a powerful working class vanguard, numbering 100,000 by 1927 The Party had other militant supporters and reliable helpers in the Young Communist League, with its 100,000 members, the Red Women's Organisation and International Labour Defence These organisations drew into their ranks all non Communists who wanted to fight against the arbitrary and violent sway of the reaction, for the victory of peace and democracy

Fear of the Alliance of the Red Front and its "Red General" Thaelmann, as he was called by his enemies, impelled the bourgeoisie to ask the government to ban the Red Front In 1929, the German government headed by the Social Democrat Muhler imposed that ban But the Red Front continued to function illegally for a long time Many of its members fought fascism after Hitler seized power, and gave their lives for the workers' cause To this day the older genera

Thaelmann in Leningrad, at a meeting in honour of his arrival (1928)

tion of the German working class proudly remembers the Red Front and its leader Teddy, as Ernst Thaelmann was affectionally called by the workers.

The successful activities of the Communist Party in the mass organisations of the working people spurred the German proletariat and the Communist Party itself to ever greater militancy. The Party's influence grew among the Social Democrats, the rank-and-file union membership, the women's organisations and cooperative societies. Its membership soared to 300,000 by 1933, or almost double the 1928 figure.

Under Thaelmann the Communist Party worked particul-

arly hard for working class unity and joint action by the Communists and Social Democrats, as important prerequisites for the creation of a united front against the growing danger of fascism

While he exposed the Right wing leaders of the German Social Democratic Party and of the trade unions Thaelmann made every effort to win over the Social Democratic workers who had been duped by the social demagogy of their leaders He never tired of reminding the German Communists "to give the Social Democratic workers a hand of friendship" To win over their Social Democratic class brothers to the united front, Thaelmann taught them, they must focus attention not on what divided the Social Democrats and Communists, but on what they had in common by virtue of their class position as workers Not by means of clubs, but by comradely persuasion, should the Social Democrats who subscribed to erroneous views be brought into the ranks of the class revolutionary front

Thaelmann daringly hurtled the barriers that stood in the way of the united front strategy He was instrumental, at the 12th Congress of the C P G in 1929, in bringing about the expulsion of the Right opportunist leaders Brandler and Thalheimer, who had been obstructing joint action by different sections of the working class Under his guidance, the C P G exposed the petty bourgeois sectarians known as the "radical intellectuals", eminently Neumann and Hirsch, who harangued against a united proletarian front During his visits to primary Party units, he often reproached the members who took a wrong attitude to the Social Democratic and Christian workers

The C P G 's firm stand for united action with the Social Democrats was effective A great many Social-Democratic workers left their Party and broke with the reformist unions Not a few Social Democrats joined the C P G or supported the Communists' mass campaigns, aligning themselves with the revolutionary trade union opposition Some of them voted

for the C P G in the 1932 elections to the Reichstag, which partially explains the 5,900 000 communist poll (an increase of 1,300,000 over 1930)

Thaelmann sought to strengthen the ties of the revolutionary workers and the toiling peasantry To him the formation of a united anti fascist front was inconcivable without the participation of the allies of the working class especially the peasantry The masses of German agricultural workers hailed Thaelmann as a zealous champion of their interests

In view of the marked deterioration in the condition of the German farming population following on the heels of the 1929 economic crisis, the Central Committee of the C P G drew up and published a 'Programme of Aid to the Farmers' which was first read out by Thaelmann in May 1931 at a big farmers' meeting at Oldenburg, and there heartily endorsed by his hearers He raised the slogan "Strengthen the alliance of the workers and peasants", in opposition to the opportunists' underestimation of the peasant question and the sectarian slant on the peasantry assumed by some members of the C P G

The appearance of this programme stimulated Party work in the countryside A Farmers Committees movement sustained in its spirit arose in a number of districts during 1931 Thaelmann sponsored the formation of the Union of Agricultural Workers so popular with the poor farmers

The farming population recognised Thaelmann's services on its behalf Quite a few farmers' meetings, conferences and congresses supported his candidacy in the 1932 presidential elections Farmers took an active part in the Anti Fascist Week observed by the Communist Party on an all German scale between July 10 and July 17, 1932 During the years of nazi rule, anti fascists often found shelter in the villages

The publication in 1930, at Thaelmann's suggestion, of the "Programme of National and Social Emancipation of

the German People" played a big part in the fight to win the support of the widest sections of the population for the united anti fascist front The Programme pointed out the growing danger of the country s fascisation and denounced the demagogy of the National Socialist Party which it described as an "anti people's, anti workers' anti socialist party, a party of the extreme reaction, of the exploitation and enslavement of the working people" The Programme called for a nationwide struggle against fascism and imperialism, for the establishment of a democratic Germany

During the period that led up to the Hitler dictatorship when it became increasingly plain that monopoly capital had decided to use the fascists' organisations to destroy all the democratic liberties and rights in Germany and prepare for another world war, Thaelmann particularly stressed the importance of organising a nationwide struggle against war and fascism His watchword "Hitler is war!" was taken up by the toiling masses

Under Thaelmann's skilful direction the Communist Party successfully carried through a number of large scale anti fascist undertakings on the eve of the nazis' advent to power The Communists were the organisers of the Union of Struggle Against Fascism which in 1932 had over 100,000 members A number of congresses and conferences against hunger and fascism were held in 1931 and 1932 In the space of two months in the latter half of 1932, more than 900 Communist-led strikes as well as many anti fascist meetings and demonstrations took place

And yet Ernst Thaelmann's urgent warning that "Hitler is war" was not understood by the majority of the German people

Thaelmann was not only the architect of a militant and united German Communist Party, he was also a fervent internationalist and one of the prominent leaders of the international communist and working class movement, in whose unity and fighting solidarity he saw the truest guarantee

Ernst Thaelmann speaking in Berlin on May Day 1930

of victory in the fight against world imperialism, reaction and war From 1924 to 1928, Thaelmann was a candidate member of the Comintern Executive, and from 1928 to 1943, a member of that Executive He did a great deal to strengthen the Profintern or Trade Union International which stood for international proletarian solidarity

He fought staunchly and without fear against the ideolo gical opponents of the Comintern, for the purity and victory of the ideas of Marxism Leninism in the international com munist and working class movement With true Leninist consistency and determination, he pressed the battle against the "Rights", the "Lefts", and the "ultra Left" opportun ists, the vulgarisers and falsifiers of Marxism Leninism in the C P G and the world communist movement He parti cularly exposed the spouters of "ultra Left" slogans, like Maslov, Ruth Fischer, etc , who tried to push the C P G onto the road of adventurism and undermine faith in the unity of the world communist movement and its vanguard, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Thaelmann firmly repelled the attempts of individual splitters in the Communist Parties of other countries to minimise the leading role of the Comintern Executive as the headquarters of the proletarian revolution He staunchly defended the C P S U as the strongest and most experien ced party in the international communist movement He came unfailingly to the help of the Leninist Central Committee of the C P S U in its fight against Trotskyism, Right-wing and Left wing opportunism

In 1926, when the Trotskyites and Zinovievites joined with the "ultra Lefts" of the C P G in trying to discredit the general line of the C P S U , Thaelmann declared "No one can set us against the Communist International or our brothers in the Russian party "

" an attack on the All Union Communist Party (Bolshe viks) is not only an attack on the All Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)," he said, "it is also an attack on the

Communist International, and therefore on the West European revolution as well Further I will say that the attacks of the 'ultra Lefts' will not affect the solidarity of the German or other parties with the All Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and that all and any attempts in that direction will prove unavailing Those who make such attempts are doomed to failure "

Thaelmann was a fervent revolutionary a brilliant organiser and political leader He was likewise a distinguished Marxist theoretician who did much to elaborate the key strategic and tactical problems of the international working class movement Many of the theoretical propositions he advanced more than thirty years ago have not lost their significance or pertinency today He stressed that the main contradiction that rent the world was the contradiction between capitalism and socialism "The workers of the whole world," he said, 'have a most vital stake in the building of the socialist economy Every big success on the economic front offers fresh proof to the working class of the whole world of the advantages of the socialist system of economy over the capitalist That world historic question will in the last analysis decide the outcome of the fight between us and the bourgeoisie, between communism and Social Democracy " His belief in the victory of socialism in other countries including Germany was unshakeable He said "Filled with unflinching courage and militancy sustained by ardent proletarian internationalism, we solemnly vow for our part to smooth the way for powerful new states to appear soon alongside the USSR, states that will become bulwarks of peace and will bring near the day when socialism is built inside their borders '

Today the socialist system is represented by many states besides the Soviet Union, and one of them is the German Democratic Republic It is precisely in the sphere of economic construction that the socialist countries are exerting their main revolutionising effect on world development

As before, the focal point of social progress is the struggle of the socialist countries against imperialism The socialist system has emerged as the determinative factor of human progress

E Thaelmann was strongly against viewing the liberation struggle of the peoples in isolation from the revolutionary activities of the workers of the world "We know," he stated, "that all questions of the liberation struggle must be viewed not only from the national standpoint, but also in close connection with the fundamental problems of world economy and world politics "

Noting that the imperialist machine did not neglect a single weapon in its onslaught on the proletarian revolu tion, Thaelmann asked 'What can we oppose to that system of hostile forces?", and went on to answer the question as follows "We can oppose to it a triple front of the Soviet Union, the workers' class struggle in the capitalist countries, and the colonial liberation wars " In the inter relation and united action of those three great contemporary forces, now grown strong enough to contribute to the weakening of the imperialist system, he saw a guarantee of the success of the workers' struggle against imperialism

Ernst Thaelmann was a passionate anti-militarist, a proponent of the fraternal solidarity of working people throughout the world in their revolutionary struggle against war He was the initiator of the anti war meetings of the workers of Germany, France, Denmark, Holland and Poland which were arranged by the C P G on the French and Nether lands borders in 1931 and 1932 In October 1932, he went to Paris Maurice Thorez and he addressed a meeting of 15,000 French workers Thaelmann urged them to join with the workers of Germany in fighting German and French impe rialism On his initiative, a conference was called at Essen in January 1933 at which representatives of the West-European Communist Parties and youth leagues adopted a manifesto on united action by the working people of Germany,

France, Belgium, Britain and other countries against war and fascism

An ardent patriot of his own country, Thaelmann was also a great friend of the Soviet Union and eagerly popula rised the successes of socialist construction in the USSR and its policy of peace He fostered among his fellow Com munists and the German proletariat a spirit of friendship with the Soviet people "To create a fraternal militant alliance of the German workers and peasants with the Russian workers and peasants, and turn it into a mighty stronghold against the world bourgeoisie—such is the task we have set ourselves," he said He looked up to the USSR as a shin ing example, a "beacon of world history" lighting the way for other peoples to the radiant future He never tired of contrasting the achievements of the free Soviet people to the degradation of capitalist Germany

Thaelmann drew inspiration for his courageous fight from the very existence of the Soviet Union and its successes in building a new life His every visit to the USSR was a great school to the leader of the German proletariat People in Moscow and Leningrad, the men of the Red Navy and Red Army, many factory workers and village people knew and loved him

The sombre clouds of fascism were gathering ominously over Germany The German Communist Party put up a stiff fight to prevent the nazis from seizing power More than once it appealed to the Social Democratic Party for a united front against fascism But its appeals were ignored by the Right wing leaders of the German Social Democrats

On January 30, 1933, the day Hitler became dictator, Thael-mann again adressed himself to the S D P G and the trade unions and in the name of the Central Committee of the C P G urged them to join it in declaring a strike against fascism But the Right wing leaders of the S D P G and the trade unions spurned the proposal and so smoothed the way

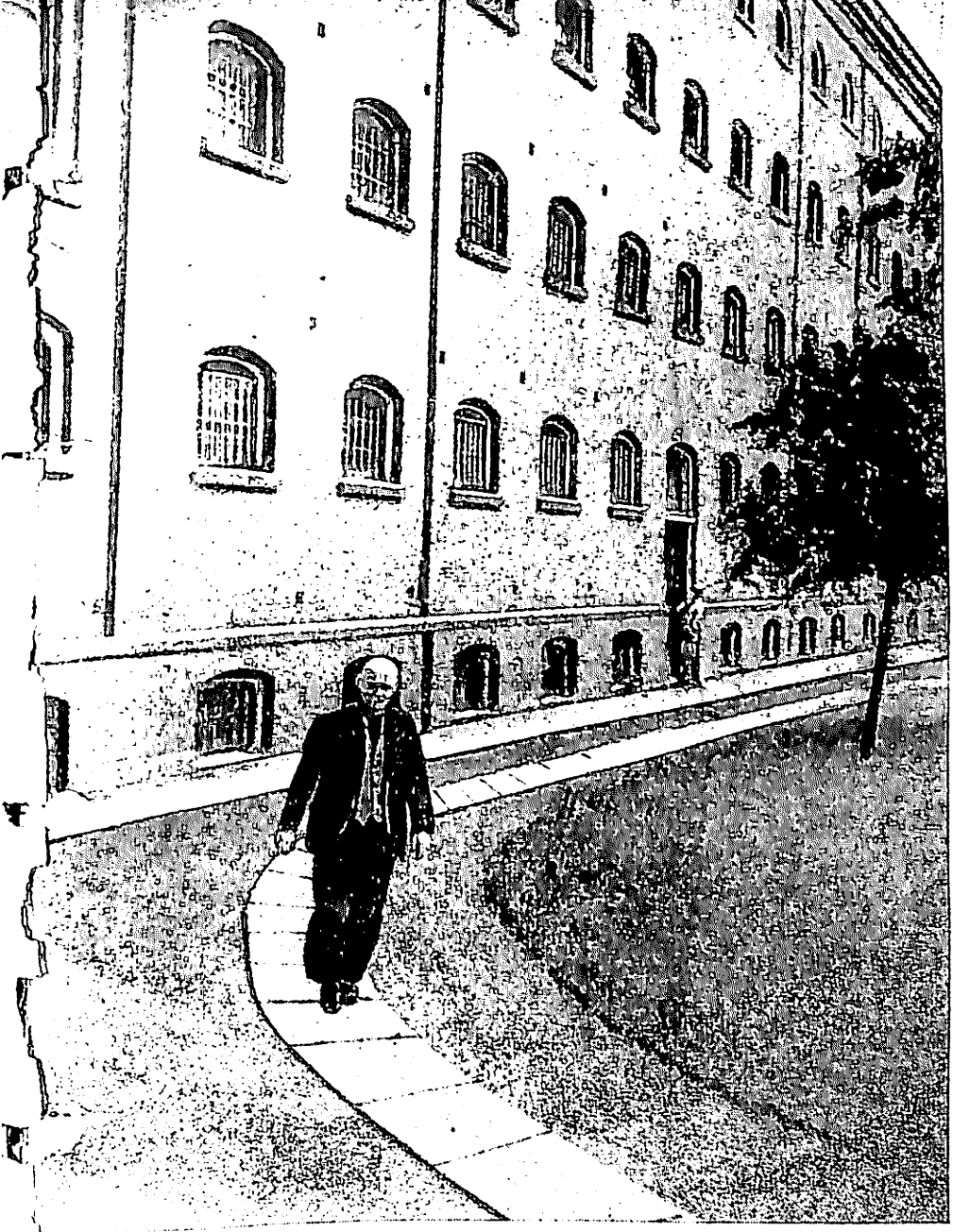
for the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in their country.

A fierce wave of repressions against the working class and all the democratic forces of the country, especially the vanguard of the German working class—the Communist Party—swept the country. Thousands upon thousands of Communists were arrested by the fascists. The newspapers and meetings of the Communist Party of Germany were banned, Communist deputies were deprived of their seats in the Reichstag. On February 27, 1933, Hitler's henchmen set fire to the Reichstag for the express purpose of incriminating the Communists and intensifying the terror against them. The Party had to go underground. Hundreds of fascist police spies were ordered to track down the outlawed Communist leaders, who went into hiding. Thaelmann's whereabouts were discovered, and on March 3, 1933, he was arrested in Charlottenburg, Berlin.

There ensued a tragic period in Ernst Thaelmann's life, spent in fascist dungeons and concentration camps. Fear made the nazi secret police conceal from the public their important captive's place of imprisonment. He was held in solitary confinement and strict isolation at the Moabit prison in Berlin. He was allowed no visitors and was kept on starvation rations. It was a long time before even Rose Thaelmann, his devoted wife and militant helpmate, was allowed to visit him.

After the fiasco of the Leipzig trial and vindication of Georgi Dimitrov and his comrades, the fascist bosses proceeded to vent their spleen on the leader of the German Communist Party. "In Thaelmann's case we won't repeat the mistakes of the Leipzig trial," threatened one of the chiefs of the fascist clique.

To "justify" themselves in the eyes of public opinion, the nazi secret police were preparing to stage a trial against Thaelmann. The Hitlerites enlisted numberless provocateurs and spies to "prove" Thaelmann's guilt on a charge of



Thaelmann in the courtyard of the Moabit prison

collecting arms and explosives and trying to organise terroristic fires as well as an armed uprising The nazi press spread slanderous lies to blacken Ernst Thaelmann and the Communist Party Meanwhile the fascist satraps were busy trying to break his will by the most refined methods of torture and humiliation, make him "confess" to crimes in which he had never had a part and betray his comrades He was beaten, hypnotised, insulted and blackmailed All kinds of provocations were tried out on him, for instance—the Gestapo "confronted" him with the traitor and provocateur Katner When he refused flatly to give the Gestapo any information, he was beaten with iron rods, and thrown with shackles on his hands and feet into a death cell, where two guards kept constant watch over him Neither this torture chamber nor the savage beatings he suffered could break the spirit of this revolutionary hero

His ordeals did break Thaelmann's health, however "As a result of many things I have endured here lately, my health has taken a turn for the worse," he wrote his wife in one of his letters

After Rose Thaelmann was at last given permission to see Ernst, with a Gestapo man on watch, she described their meeting to her daughter in these words "The door opened, and the SS gangsters led your father in He could hardly walk He had no teeth in his mouth His face was swollen He was all black and blue He couldn't sit I cried out in horror 'What have they done to you?'"

The news that Thaelmann was being tortured by the nazis horrified the whole world People in all countries rose to the defence of the leader of the German Communists The wrath of the millions was vent in the creation of Thaelmann Defence Committees, in protests to the German government, in mighty demonstrations of proletarian solidarity in the streets of Moscow, Paris, Prague, London, New York and many other cities Thaelmann's name became a symbol of struggle against Hitler's bloody dictatorship Prominent

European and American intellectuals spoke up for Thaelmann To the defence of communism and Ernst Thaelmann!" called Romain Rolland Many other writers—Henri Barbusse, Theodore Dreiser, Martin Andersen Nexo, Heinrich Mann—joined in the demand for Thaelmann s release Maxim Gorky said The time will come when all hearts will burn as one flame and sear the rotting ulcer of fascism Long live Thaelmann and his gallant comrades who are irrevocably digging fascism s grave

Months and years went by, and still the fascist legal experts' could not frame a Thaelmann case", there was nothing in his activities to incriminate him Thaelmann's fascist appointed defence counsel, Friedrich Retter, told the world as much After acquainting himself with the trumped up indictment against Thaelmann and his personal talks with the proletarian leader Retter was reluctant to become a partner to the nazi s crime and fled the country, taking a copy of the state indictment with him At a meeting of jurists which took place in Paris, Retter described Thaelmann in this way Thaelmann remains a simple and courageous worker conscious of his own human worth He has borne the harsh blows of fate with dignity and fortitude He will not let them break him It seems to me that even his political adversaries, assuming they have the courage, should feel respect for Thaelmann s spirit and devotion to his ideas "

Retter's exposures gave new impetus to the campaign for Thaelmann s release A powerful movement of the wide masses swept the world It and their own fear of another fiasco like the Leipzig trial made the nazis abandon the idea of taking Thaelmann into the courtroom To prevent open action in defence of Thaelmann from breaking out in Berlin, they transferred their prisoner from Moabit to the Hannover dungeon

By packing off Thaelmann like this without trial and conviction, his fascist torturers hoped to completely isolate

the German communist leader and the Communist Part from the people, and so paralyse the Party's fight agains fascism But they miscalculated The German Communis were not intimidated by the nazi terror, they continue their fearless resistance to fascist violence under illegal conditions At the helm of the Party stood Thaelmann s true comrades W Pieck W Ulbricht, W Florin, etc Hun dreds of illegal Communist Party units functioned throughout the country

Practically half of the German Communist Party's mem bers were thrown into prisons or concentration camps by the nazis Some had to leave Germany and carry on the fi against fascism outside the country Thirty five thousa Party members were physically annihilated by the nazis Like Ernst Thaelmann, they all bore themselves staunchly to the end Despite the bitter ordeals to which they were subjected, they died with proud faith in their ideals in their hearts and with curses for the murderers on their lips

John Schehr, originally a Hamburg plumber, heroically met his death in a fascist dungeon A member of the Central Committee of the C P G , Schehr was brutally tortured by the SS They flogged him, they scalded his body with boil ing water, they burned out big patches of his skin They could not make Schehr talk Instead of answering their questions, he spat in the faces of his torturers

In June 1935, the Hamburg Communist Fiete Schulze was beheaded The state prosecutor said that his "speech is more dangerous than bullets' When his death sentence was pronounced Schulze shouted in the teeth of the fascists "There will be one fighter less, but we ll win just the same Come to the execution all of you—come and see how a Com munist dies!

The leader of the Hamburg Red Front Edgar Andre was tortured to death His last words were "Death to fascism, long life to communism!"

In his parting letter to his wife and children before being executed, Herman Fischer exclaimed 'May communism thrive over the centuries for the good of all mankind!"

The calibre of such men moved D Z Manuilsky to declare at the 17th Congress of the C P S U that "Every Communist in that kind of underground represents proletarian gold on the scales of history Honour and glory to the German Communist Party, its Central Committee and its leader Thaelmann for rearing such cadres!"

In their leader and teacher Ernst Thaelmann, the German Communists were fortunate to have before them an inspiring model of courage and militancy in the fight against fascism His name was a symbol of victory The champions of liberty who came to the defence of the Spanish Republic named their International Brigade in his honour

Although strictly isolated and kept under constant surveillance by his nazi wardens, Thaelmann managed to participate in the practical direction of the fight against fascism through his wife and daughter, the only visitors allowed him in prison, he transmitted letters to the outside world These letters, written on tiny scraps of paper, contained valuable advice and opinions on various political problems He spoke to his relatives with the help of mimicry and gestures, he used a sharp bone to cut coded texts on cardboard cigarette boxes which reached his friends through a sympathetic prison employee Risking their own lives, his relatives smuggled a slate into the prison and on it conveyed information about the Party to him, or received his important messages in reply

During one of his daughter's visits, he wrote on the slate "I am going to give you important material—twenty notebooks filled with my writing You must hide them carefully From here go on to Hamburg, and remember that these are important notes They must be got to our com

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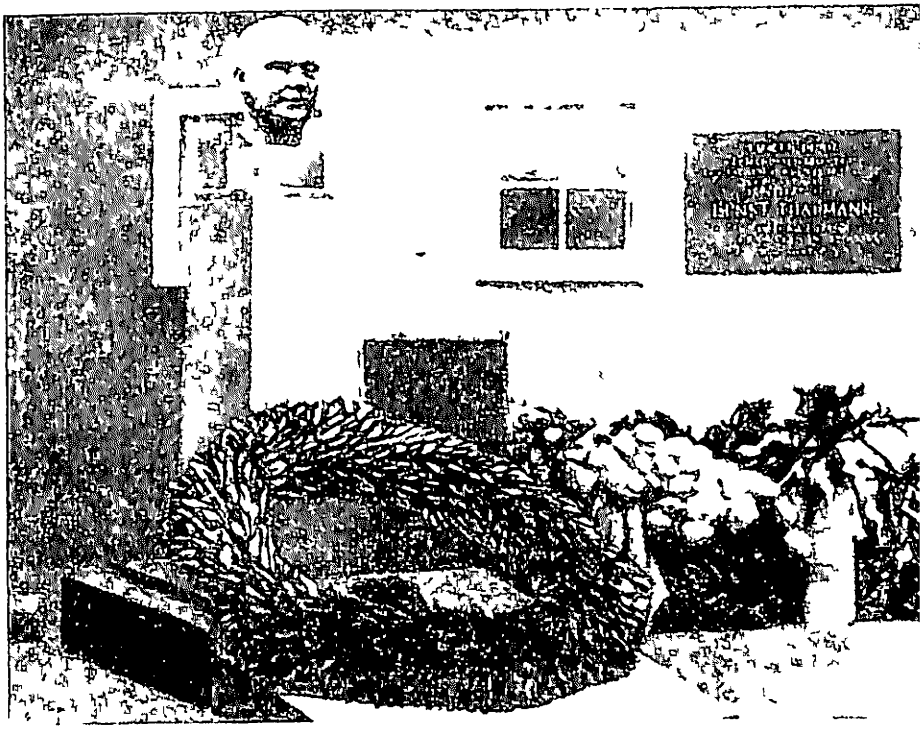
* Eminent Soviet and Communist Party leader

rades " Thaelmann had learned from the anti aircraft gunners assigned to duty on the prison roof, with whom he had esta blished good contacts when the guard was to be changed, taking advantage of the moment his daughter left the prison safely with her precious burden She did as her father told her and kept his notes and letters intact Thaelmann s ad vice and instructions were utilised by his comrades in draw ing up Party decisions on the prosecution of the fight against fascism

The SS went on torturing Thaelmann during his entire incarceration in the prisons of the Third Reich A cell in the Hannover dungeon was specially rebuilt with a smaller light transom than usual The watery diet made him unna turally stout his weight increased to 105 kilograms He wa distressed and worried by the continual persecution of h wife and daughter, whose flat was searched and belonging destroyed The nazis also resorted to crude forms of mental torture, for instance they tried to make him believe that his friends had forgotten him, although batches of letters, post cards and bouquets of flowers kept pouring into the prison for Thaelmann, fascist terror notwithstanding One day the warden asked him to state in writing that he had turned a new leaf ' and given up his former ideas Thaelmann an swered with passion ' You must be a thorough scoundrel! You ought to know by this time that you will never get any such statement from me, even if you make me stay here till I die "

Soon after fascist Germany s treacherous attack on the Soviet Union his Gestapo jailers made a special point of calling on him to tell him jeeringly that in a few days the fascists would be in Moscow His answer to the scoundrels was that all the fascist army will find in the Soviet Union is its own grave ' When they laughed, he added Your blitzkrieg will end in your own complete destruction "

He was right The Soviet Army did break the backbone of the fascist beast Crazed with fear, their fighting spirit



Monument to Thaelmann at Buchenwald

broken, the nazis let loose ever greater terror Hundreds of anti fascists were murdered, mass repressions were multi plied Thaelmann knew the nazis would never set him free

As if they would let me out into the great wide world from my cell," he wrote a fellow prisoner in January 1944 "No they will never do that of their own will Something else is more likely to happen terrible and depressing to contem plate now As the Soviet Army pushes ahead and the military position of the nazi regime deteriorates they will do all they can to checkmate Thaelmann "

Fear of retribution drove the fascists to a dastardly deed On August 18, 1944, Thaelmann was brutally murde red and his body cremated in the Buchenwald concentration camp Having killed Thaelmann, the nazis were afraid to

make their crime known to the world It was not until September 14, 1944, that they released their fictive report alleging that the former Reichstag deputies Bretscheid (a Social Democrat) and Thaelmann had been killed on August 28 when Buchenwald was bombed by British and American planes

A memorial plaque on one of the buildings still standing at Buchenwald bears this inscription

Undying Glory
to the Great Son of the German People
Leader of the German Working Class
Ernst Thaelmann
who was murdered here by the fascists
on August 18, 1944

The world shuddered with horror when the nazis' foul deed became known After the brutal murder, the anti fascists at Buchenwald gathered to mourn Thaelmann's death A poem entitled 'Listen, World!", written by a fellow prisoner, was circulated among the inmates of the camp 'Only your body is dead, your ideas live on in us " it said

Ernst Thaelmann died at his militant post like a true soldier of the revolution The lives of men like him, their struggle and their death are immortalised in the common victory over fascism

The ideas for which the ardent patriot of the German nation fought and laid down his life have triumphed in his country They have been realised in the German Democratic Republic, a socialist state of workers and peasants, and in the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which has achieved the working class unity for which Ernst Thaelmann struggled

Progressive humanity remembers Ernst Thaelmann not only as the leader of the German working class who applied Marxist-Leninist theory to German realities, but also as a

gallant soldier of the revolution, a great anti fascist, an ardent internationalist One of the outstanding leaders of the Communist International, he fought with Leninist high-principledness for the purity of Marxism Leninism and the monolithic solidarity of the international communist and working class movement, in which he saw an earnest of the victory of the proletarian revolution

The German working people revere the memory of Ernst Thaelmann by advancing the cause for which he gave his life, that cause prospers in the German Democratic Republic where the Socialist Unity Party of Germany is directing the construction of a socialist society, in the Federal German Republic it is upheld by the Communist Party of Germany, now as under the nazis reduced to illegal status At the 1963 Congress of the C P G , Max Reimann, First Secretary of the Central Committee, declared that the German Communist Party would perpetuate the spirit of Ernst Thaelmann's life and struggle by imbuing its members and the working class of the Federal Republic with feelings of friendship and love for the Soviet Union and the C P S U

To the West German militarists and the Bonn revanchists, however, Thaelmann's memory is odious They are trying to relegate to oblivion everything that speaks, however faintly of his radiant life In 1956, they renamed the street in Hamburg that was named in his honour after the defeat of the nazis

But the West German reactionaries cannot erase Thaelmann's image from the minds of the working people no matter how hard they try It calls to every honest German to resist the resurgence of fascism

The house where Thaelmann once lived still stands at 66 Tarpenbekstrasse in Hamburg Comrades and friends have fixed a memorial plaque on the wall It reads "In Memorium Ernst Thaelmann, chairman of the Communist Party of Germany, lived in this house He was born in Hamburg on April 16, 1886, arrested in Berlin by the Gestapo

Dedication of a statue of Thaelmann in Leningrad.
The speaker is Rose Thaelmann

The house in Hamburg where Thaelmann lived an enlargement of the memorial plaque

on March 3, 1933, and, after twelve years in prison, was murdered in the Buchenwald concentration camp on August 18, 1944 ' Under the plaque is a small vase, which is never empty, summer or winter All year round flowers wreaths or the fresh twigs of the evergreen fir are reverently placed in it by his townsmen and people from other West German cities Their offerings are particularly lavish on the anniversaries of Thaelmann's birth and his tragic death

The German people, and with them men and women all over the world cherish the memory of the great Communist and champion of the happiness and freedom of his fellow men, Ernst Thaelmann

Nikos Belojanis

Nikos Belojanis

I am being tried as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece I am being tried because my Party is battling for peace for independence for freedom That is the policy of the Greek Communist Party you want to condemn in my person

N Belojanis

The history of Greece abounds in wonderful examples of heroism, her devoted sons and daughters have multiplied the glory and honour of the nation

The most stirring pages in that glorious record of struggle for the happy future of Hellas were written by the Communists of Greece, the flower of the freedom loving nation

The ruling element in Greece tries to paint the Greek Communist Party as an unpatriotic and even an espionage organisation That opinion is not shared by the ordinary men and women of the country, who feel the deepest ties of kinship with the Greek Communist Party They know that the Communists have spared no effort, not even life itself, to attain for the Greek working people the promise of a happy, peaceful life They know what enormous sacrifices the Communists have borne in the name of that great goal They regard the heroes who gave their lives for the people's cause with the profoundest admiration and respect

The name of Nikos Belojanis, "the man with the carnation", ardent revolutionary and champion of his people s happiness, shines with a radiance all its own in the glorious annals of revolutionary struggle by the Greek people and the Greek Communist Party

Who was Belojanis? What is the story of his life, which was cut short when he was only 37? Why was he killed?

The Beginning of the Road

Nikos Belojanis was born on December 22, 1915, into a craftsman's family at Amalias, in the Peloponnesus

His childhood and adolescent years were spent near ancient Olympia of classic fame, where the Olympic games originated He went to the elementary school at Amalias and then the high school, completing it in 1932

Having an eager and inquiring mind, he began as a youth to take an interest in progressive ideas He read avidly and often discussed problems of socialism with his school friends He took an active part in two student strikes

In 1934, at the age of nineteen, Belojanis joined the Communist Party From that time on his life was linked with the Party and its struggle for the people's welfare

Eighteen years later, when he was condemned to death, Nikos Belojanis wrote from his solitary cell "I made the ideas of socialism my creed when I was seventeen Since then, these twenty years, I have dedicated all my energies to the struggle for democracy, for the independence and prosperity of my country For those ideals, my ideals, the reactionaries had me expelled from the university and exiled I did a long prison stretch under Metaxas I gave up the career I could easily have had for a life of persecution, hardship and suffering "

In 1935, Belojanis was elected secretary of the Amalias Party organisation

He had a direct hand in the strikes that broke out in the town and the spread of the popular movement in defence

of civil rights and the workers' demands His energetic Party activities did much to strengthen the influence and prestige of the Party among the masses

Arrested and deported to one of the Greek islands for a year in March 1936, his trial, held in his absence several months later (in May), resulted in a two years' prison term on a charge of organising the Amalias strikes He was also prohibited from ever again taking up his studies at the university

The sentence was appealed, however, and at the end of June of the same year he returned to Amalias to resume his active Party work

At that time the progressive forces of the country, led by the Communists, were waging a determined struggle for the independence of Greece, for the basic rights of the people and the preservation of peace The Communists achie ved considerable successes in organising the strike movement and other working class activities, in alerting and mobilising the progressives for resistance to the fascist threat, to war and the other unpopular policies of the reactionary ruling and military cliques

This growing democratic movement alarmed the rulers of the country The fascist coup d'etat on August 4, 1936, culminated in the establishment of a military dictatorship headed by General Metaxas, an extieme reactionary and admirer of Hitler

Metaxas declared a state of siege in the country, suspended Parliament, disbanded the democratic parties and Left trade unions, banned the progressive newspapers, and im prisoned or exiled thousands of anti fascists and Commu nists

Metaxas' emergency Law 375 made it possible for citi zens to be tried by a military court even in peace time and to be sentenced to death for their political views

It was invoked in condemning many a Greek Communist and democrat to death or imprisonment for life because of

it hundreds of heroes of the Greek Resistance were thrown into jail

The Greek Communist Party had to press its struggle against fascism and the growing danger of war in strictly conspiratorial conditions But its battle for the liberty and genuine independence of the country went on

Nikos Belojanis was engaged in Party work in Patras first in a local branch of the Communist Party of Greece, and then as the secretary of a Party army organisation when, in December 1936, he was again arrested The Metaxas butchers beat and tortured him, but failed to extort a confession The names and whereabouts of his comrades were safe with Belojanis, and the army organisation he headed continued to function undiscovered Since they could not muster sufficient evidence against him for a big case, the police had to let him off with a sentence of three months in prison and six months deportation

In June 1937, Belojanis fled from his place of detention to Patras He worked for a while as the secretary of a district Party committee, and then as secretary of the Elias regional committee

I Am a Communist

In May 1938, Belojanis was arrested the third time Again he escaped, and again Metaxas' sleuths clamped down on him He was brought to trial

In the courtroom, Belojanis' counsel founded his plea on the defendant s youth the young man had not realised what he was doing, he had been put up to it by others , etc But Belojanis scorned that argument, and made it clear that he was a Communist by conviction and would always stand up for his communist ideas

He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and two years' deportation This time he was confined in a prison on the island of Aegina, where hundreds of other convicted

Communists were serving their terms Comrades who knew him in prison praised his optimism, staunchness and self-control He was always ready to come to the help of others

While in prison, Belojanis happened upon a copy of the Gospel in the Russian language A fellow political prisoner who had a smattering of Russian helped him to learn the alphabet Unknown to his guards, who naively assumed that he had 'taken to religion", he applied himself to the study of Russian Belojanis' great persistence and patience enabled him with no other text than the Gospel to teach himself the language of the country he loved and admired as the future of the whole human race

Fourteen years later, in the speech in his own defence at the trial where he was given his second death sentence for alleged 'espionage", Nikos Belojanis stated 'It is our conviction that if Greece is drawn into another war, that war will spell disaster to her The next war must not find Greece in the camp opposed to the Soviet Union, a country from which absolutely nothing divides us and to which in the last analysis Greece owes its liberation "

The Svastika Over the Acropolis

Meanwhile the threat of a direct fascist invasion of Greece was becoming more imminent Intent on drawing Greece into the orbit of its influence, nazi Germany used the pro-fascist Metaxas government to force shackling agreements on the country and take control of a number of branches of its economy The Hitlerites inundated the country with "advisers" Gestapo agents, and fascist literature

The Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party warned the Greek people of the imminence of a fascist inva sion and urged them to put up a strong fight for the establishment of a trustworthy government capable of upholding the independence of the country and restoring the demo cratic rights and liberty of its citizens

On the outbreak of the Second World War, the Greek government, yielding to the pressure of public opinion, proclaimed its neutrality That did not keep the Italian fascist army from invading Greece on October 28 1940— an event that rocked the land And at that critical juncture the Communists again demonstrated their supreme devotion to the interests of the people, their patriotism and concern for the destinies of the nation Communists languishing in prison cells demanded to be sent to the front without delay to be on the forward lines of the fight against fascism

The Italian army was able to occupy a slice of Greek territory but in a few days the heroic Greek army, joined by all the patriotic forces of the nation assumed the offensive, drove out the invaders and pursued them on to the territory of occupied Albania Mussolini s vaunted army found itself on the brink of defeat

The war in Greece having taken such an unfavourable turn for 'il Duce", nazi Germany rushed to his aid On April 6, 1941, the German fascist hordes overran Greece Peaceful cities and villages were devoured by flames, and the blood of innocent people, of the old and weak the women and children, was shed

Inside Greece, the German fascist invaders encountered the heroic resistance of the people But the two sides were unequally matched On top of that, the venal generals of the Greek army capitulated one after another, allowing the invaders to march straight to the heart of the country Athens By June 2, 1941, the whole of Greece including its islands was occupied by the nazis The king and his ministers abandoned the country to its fate, and scurried off to Egypt

Forward, ELAS!

Despite the treachery of the ruling clique, all honest people in Greece rallied around the Communist Party and fought under its leadership for justice, liberty and the sal

vation of the country from fascism The Party took the ini tiative in forming guerilla detachments and subversion groups These people s avengers dealt the enemy telling blows annihilating manpower military trains, arms and equipment During the night of May 30 1941 a brave Greek youth by the name of Manolis Glezos (a name as yet little known to the world) accompanied by his comrade Apostolos Santas, performed a historic exploit They tore down the despised fascist flag that had been raised by the invaders over the Acropolis

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people re ignited the national liberation struggle of the Greek people In June 1941, the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party urged all progressive elements to join the united anti fascist front and spread the national liberation war against the fascist invaders

September 1941 saw the formation by the Greek Com munist Party of *EAM*, the National Liberation Front embrac ing all democratic and progressive organisations and parties

In December 1941 *EAM* fused the guerilla detachments operating against the invaders into one military organisa tion with a single command and so the National Liberation Army of Greece, or *ELAS*, was formed

The Greek Communist Party was indeed the soul of *EAM* and *ELAS* Communists were always to be found on the dangerous and difficult sectors of the front Tens of thou sands of Greek Communists, including many members of the Central and Control Committees of the Party, gave their lives to end the terrible brown scourge of German fascism

Nikos Belojanis was in jail when the fascists invaded Greece He was transferred from one prison to another, from Aegine, where he was detained until 1942, to Acronaup- lia, and then to concentration camps in Italy and Germany In September 1943, friends helped him to make his escape from the Athens prison hospital Sotiria (Salvation), where he was placed due to illness

No sooner was he out than he plunged into the fight against the nazi invaders He was made an under secretary and then the first secretary of the Patras municipal branch of the C P G , and simultaneously a head of the Third *ELAS* Division of Greek guerilla fighters (*andartesi*) whose operations in the Peloponnesus won them the applause of the whole world By that time *ELAS* had become a formidable army, numbering thousands of well trained officers and men By the autumn of 1943, it had liberated two thirds of the Greek mainland and tied up eleven or twelve fascist divisions in its operations

The victories of the nationwide Resistance aroused the open fear and hostility of the reactionary emigrants, the bourgeois oligarchy and the pro fascist elements inside the country All the while that *ELAS* was waging fierce battles against the invaders on the fields of Thessaly Rumelia Macedonia, Epirus and Peloponnesus and in the Olympus and Pindus mountains the adventurists snugly ensconced in Cairo were concerned only about retaining power King George II urged the leaders of the Resistance to terminate the hostilities against the nazis and 'send the people back to their peaceful labours" At the same time the political drummers of the reactionary emigrants banded together the pro fascist and monarchistic scum inside Greece into all kinds of anti popular armed organisations which they pretended to arraign for the fight against the invaders But those organisations as a rule collaborated actively with the Germans against the National Liberation Army

Even that did not prevent the *ELAS*, an army now numbering 130,000 officers and men and supported by the overwhelming majority of the Greek people, from scoring victory after victory and wresting one city and province after another from the enemy People's ruling bodies were set up on the territory liberated from the Germans The Political Committee of National Liberation, formed in March 1944, assumed the powers of a provisional democratic government The

parliamentary elections held throughout Greece in April 1944 in effect laid the political foundation of a people's democratic system in Greece

In the autumn of 1944, the German fascist army beat a hasty retreat from Greece rather than wait until the successful advance of the Soviet forces in the Balkans cut off its approaches to Germany On October 12, 1944, Athens was liberated The emancipation for which so much blood had been shed now seemed near at hand

But the Greek people were not to enjoy the fruits of their victory In place of the nazis came the British Expeditionary Force, on the pretext of ousting the already departed German fascist invaders With it arrived the monarchist army and the emigre government

The British imperialists sent their army to Greece with far reaching aims in mind They wanted to crush the national liberation movement of the Greek people, restore the pre war regime, and then turn Greece into their military and political springboard to the Balkans The plans of the British military fully accorded with the selfish interests of the Greek reaction

The British ruling clique realised that a regime bolstered by British bayonets and lacking the support and trust of the Greek people could not last General Eddy, head of the British military mission, was constrained to admit that the monarchists and men who had backed the August 4th government (i e , the Metaxas dictatorship) carried no political weight, and that the Greek people hated their leaders

For this reason the British command, by passing the agreement reached between the emigre government and *EAM*, endeavoured unilaterally to disarm the National-Liberation Army yet preserve the armed forces of the monarchist fascists

But the *EAM* leadership and *ELAS* command saw through the plot of the reaction and refused to obey the disarmament order At that the British forces, abetted by the monarchist-

fascist troops, the police battalions and the armed gangs of the former collaborationists and Gestapo minions, launched an offensive against *ELAS* and did their utmost to destroy the armed forces of the people and so deprive the latter of their resistance power

On December 3, 1944 a peaceful demonstration of 500,000 people against the conversion of Greece into a vassal of the British imperialists was shot down in Athens The following day, December 4, a peaceful procession of Athenians who were seeing the demonstrators killed the day before off on their last journey was again fired upon

In reply to the provocation, the people shouldered arms and decimated the police the gendarmes and the extremist gangs equipped by the British The British command brought up tanks planes and warships to crush the democratic forces And so to the long years of suffering and bloodshed Greece had known, to the hundreds of thousands of patriots who had been shot tortured or starved to death during the occupation, were added the hundreds of anti fascists killed by the "allied liberators"

For thirty three days *ELAS* and the people heroically resisted the British interventionists and their henchmen But in the end, being greatly outnumbered by the enemy, they had to abandon Athens On January 11, 1945, a truce was concluded and on February 12, emissaries of the belligerent sides signed the Varkis treaty providing for the immediate cessation of hostilities, amnesty of political prisoners, the democratisation of the state machine and public life, the dissolution of all armed detachments and groups, the formation of a new army and the holding of general and free elections

While the democrats faithfully kept the terms of the treaty and the *ELAS* units were demobilised and their arms handed over to the authorities, the reactionary government shamelessly broke these terms Emboldened by the British interventionists, it not only failed to demobilise the numerous armed

bands of terrorists and monarchists, but in fact created new ones A wave of terror swept the country Thousands upon thousands of former Resistance fighters primarily Communists and *EAM* and *ELAS* leaders were imprisoned

Confronted with the threat of extermination the Greek patriots had no other resort but to go back to the mountians and fight for their lives The armed forces of the reaction and British interventionists launched large scale punitive operations against the patriots who had gone into the mountains drawing the Greek people into a sanguinary civil war

To counter the operations of the government and interventionist armies, the patriots' guerilla units were realigned in October 1946 to form the Greek Democratic Army, on whose banners blazed the words "Freedom, Democracy and Independence for Greece!"

For almost three years the Greek Democratic Army heroically resisted the superior numbers of the government army, plentifully equipped with the most up to date American arms and defended the liberty and national independence of Greece against foreign intervention

Six years later, at his trial, Nikos Belojanis described this period of the Greek Communist Party s activity as follows The creation of the Greek Democratic Army and its struggle was not an attempt to overthrow the regime, which was already tottering We did not want war We were against violence and coercion "

After his release, Nikos Belojanis headed the educational department of the Peloponnesus Regional Committee of the C P G , giving all his energy, knowledge, experience and unusual organisational ability to the task of the ideological education of Communists At the same time he answered, as a member of the Bureau of the Regional Party Committee, for guidance of the district Party organisations

In December 1946, Belojanis joined the Greek Democratic Army and was appointed the head of the department of propaganda and education under its Supreme Command

Later he became the political commissar of one of the divi sions, and with his men fought from the beginning of the civil war to its final battles at Grammos and Vichy In August 1948, during the bitter fighting in the Kolio Kame nik area, he was wounded He did not leave his post, however and continued to inspire his fellow officers and men by the example of his bravery and scorn of the enemy

A Change of Master

The bankruptcy of its policy in Greece became so appar ent to the British government early in 1947 that it relegated the job of supporting the Greek reactionaries to the American imperialists On March 12 1947, U S President Harry Tru man officially apprised Congress of America's "interest" in Greece and Turkey

The policy proclaimed in the "Truman Doctrine" was a concentrated expression of America's aggressive foreign political course It meant that the United States imperialists were going over to a policy of force and cold war against the socialist countries with the slogan of combating "inter-national communism"

In June 1947, a Greek U S agreement was signed in Athens defining the terms of American 'economic aid" to Greece That agreement paved the way for intensive infil tration of the American monopolies into Greece, giving them a free hand in the management of its economy and armed forces, and even direct control of the Greek government

United States interference in the domestic affairs of Greece led to further reprisals against Greek democrats/ More than 15,000 people were arrested in a short time Not only Communists but all progressive minded citizens were victims of the wholesale arrests and deportations to the "islands of death" In August 1949, the reaction hurled all its available forces against the Democratic Army and, with the out and out connivance of the Americans, forced

it to lay down arms The end of the civil war did not alleviate the sufferings of the Greek people The country's economy was completely debilitated by the fascist invasion intervention by the British and American imperialists, and America's much publicised "aid" The country groaned under the burden of maintaining a huge army and thousands of police and gendarmes

Once entrenched in power, the Greek reaction rained down on the people reprisals such as they had not known even during the nazi invasion Instead of the general amnesty promised, the government put hundreds of patriots to death Thousands who had fought the invaders, who had defended their country s liberty and independence and upheld peace and democracy were cast into prisons and concentration camps, or condemned to spend the rest of their lives in exile

Twenty years have passed since the end of the Second World War The Greek ruling clique has absolved the nazi war criminals and completely forgiven them their sins, the heroes of the Greek Resistance are regarded by the government as enemies of the nation

Political prisoners, most of them Communists and former Resistance fighters, still languish in the prisons of Greece Some have been rotting in prison cells ever since the days of the fascist dictator Metaxas—more than twenty five years

The Greek reactionaries and their foreign patrons set about crushing the democratic movement first of all by decapitating its organisations and physically exterminating its leaders, primarily the Communists, the most steadfast and consistent champions of freedom Fantastic charges were cooked up overnight against them, and secret police agents and gendarmes memorised the fabricated testimony they would be required to give at the trial

Nikos Belojanis and his comrades were among the first victims of that deliberate political provocation, designed to fan the anti communist hysteria

In those dark days, Belojanis, by that time a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece, did not relinquish his place on the forward lines of the struggle Impervious to personal risk, overcoming the great difficulties of underground work, he went on fighting with the same doggedness and heroism to unite the democratic forces of the people and mobilise them for the struggle against the reactionary policy of the ruling circles, against American interference in Greece's internal affairs, for freedom and democracy, for peace and the elimination of the threat of another devastating war

The Greek secret police discovered his whereabouts and on December 20 1950, arrested Belojanis in Athens Elli Ioannidou and many other comrades were arrested at the same time Day after day for nine whole months the Greek secret police beat and tortured the patriots in the hope of wresting confessions from them that would uphold their trumped up charges and nail the members of the Greek Communist Party as "conspirators" and "enemies of the nation" The government and secret police were sure they could make the "culprits" admit the false charges But the courage and fortitude of Nikos Belojanis and his comrades foiled the perpetrators of this vicious police plot

The Patriots Accuse

The trial of Nikos Belojanis and his comrades by the Athens military tribunal opened at five o clock in the afternoon of October 19, 1951

Ninety three innocent men stood in the dock The seat of the presiding judge was filled by the arch reactionary Colonel Stavropoulos The former symbolised the hope and conscience of Greece, the latter—its shame, the treachery of its ruling clique

For twenty five days the trial was a bitter contest between Truth and Falsehood, Light and Shade, Life and Death,

between the forces of democracy, freedom and peace on the one hand, and the dark forces of reaction on the other

The absurd testimony of the "witnesses for the prosecution" (most of them the aforesaid carefully coached and rehearsed police agents) made it clear right off that the trial was a crude frame up designed to condemn not the acts but the ideas of the defendants and make use of Nikos Belojanis and his comrades to disparage the Communist Party of Greece, trusty vanguard of the Greek nation Mr Lefleur, the prominent British lawyer, who attended the trial as an observer, subsequently admitted that judgement was passed there not on the acts of men but on their opinions

In his anxiety to please his masters, Stavropoulos conducted the hearings with cruel and shocking disregard for legal decorum He ruled every statement of disadvantage to the prosecution out of order interrupted and silenced the counsel for the defence, insulted the accused, refused to let them complete their defence or put questions to the witnesses He shouted down the witnesses who muddled their lying "testimony" and hurled threats at the defendants and their lawyers "Shut up! " 'Out of order! " "No better than cattle!" were some of his comments when the false charges were disproved by the patriots and their proud and courageous replies exposed the base methods to which the perpetrators of this mockery of justice resorted

During the cross examination of the police agent Angelopoulos, Nikos Belojanis put this question to him

"You say I was sent here to carry out the decisions of the plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party "

"Yes," was the reply

"Those decisions say that basic to the activity of the Greek Communist Party is the struggle for bread, for the democratic rights of the people, and for peace Is that right?"

"Yes "

"Would you say that the struggle for bread, democratic rights and peace is a conspiracy against Greece?"

"No", came the embarrassed reply of the "witness"

"Thank you," said Belojanis 'That s all I want to know "

The police agent's answers caused an uproar in the court room Aside from his embarrassment, he was taken severely to task by his numerous colleagues for allowing the defendant to make a fool of him

The next "witness" was one by the name of Hronopoulos

"How do you know the defendants are Communists?" the defence lawyer asked

"Well, they've been arrested, haven't they?" was all this police agent could find to say Many of the other "witnesses" had no better evidence to offer

The trial revealed beyond a doubt that the defendants enjoyed the sympathy, respect and admiration of wide sections of the progressive public in Greece and the rest of the world Their courageous speeches in the courtroom did not sound like attempts to exonerate themselves, but more like scathing denunciations of the hangmen who had raised the bloody axe over freedom loving Greece, over the heads of all honest men and women who cherished peace, freedom, the independence of their homeland and happiness on earth

The defendants spoke of the disgusting methods used by their torturers, of the abuses and brutalities to which they had been subjected in order to make them confess and repudiate their political ideas

"You are not trying me for anything I have done, you are trying me because I am a Communist" said Elli Ioannidou in her speech " You thought you could make me give up my principles by using force and promising me my 'freedom' in exchange but I believe in the Communist Party of Greece, I am convinced that it holds the key to the salvation of Greece "

Nikos Belojanis delivered a stirring speech in the courtroom Belojanis' words reached all the far corners of the earth

Nikos Belojanis conferring with counsel

"I am being tried as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece I am being tried because my Party is battling for peace, for independence, for freedom That is the policy of the Greek Communist Party you want to condemn in my person," said Belojanis

The people in the crowded courtroom lent an attentive ear to the fearless and impassioned words of the man whose name has made history, words which fell like heavy stones on the heads of the hangmen sitting in the judges' seats Greece's heroic son Belojanis exposed the real meaning of the bloodthirsty farce being enacted in the courtroom

"One system, one political group tries to make another group disclaim its ideas, cringe in the face of danger, retract its beliefs," Belojanis said " If I recanted I suppose I would be vindicated and showered with honours But my life is part of the history and activity of the Greek Communist Party Dozens of times it has behooved me to choose between life, at the price of my convictions, my ideology, and death for being true to them I have always chosen the second way, and today I make the same choice "

Belojanis blasted the slanderous invention of the witnesses for the prosecution" that the Communist Party of Greece was engaged in "hostile activities directed from the outside by a foreign power" "During Marx's lifetime," he said, "there were only a handful of Communists, today some 800 million people live under socialism, and tomorrow socialism will spread to all parts of the globe Is it possible for such a vast movement to be the creation of a foreign influence?" He spoke of the intensely patriotic character of the Communist Party, of its day by day struggle for the happiness of the people and the satisfaction of their needs He reviewed the sacrifices the Communists had made for the freedom and independence of Greece

He was interrupted by the judge, but ignored the interruption and concluded 'The Greek Communist Party is deeply rooted in the people It is linked with them by indivisible ties, and cannot be destroyed by military tribunals or punitive expeditions Your judges are prejudiced judges, and so I do not ask for your clemency I will receive your sentence unbowingly and calmly and will stand before your firing squad with head held high I have no more to say "

The presiding judge fumed, Belojanis serenely returned to his seat One of the women defendants holding a bouquet of red carnations just presented to her proffered him one of the flowers As he accepted it, his stoical and grave face was lighted by a smile

At the break of day on November 16, 1951, the military tribunal handed down its awful verdict Nikos Belojanis and his eleven comrades—Theodoros Georgiadou Elli Ioannidou, Afrodita Maniati Liza Kottou Kalliopi Papadopoulou, Eustafios Dromazos, Athanassios Kanellopoulos, Stergios Grammenos, Dimitrios Kanelopoulos, Petros Papanikolau and Dimitrios Kalapholias—five women and seven men in all were condemned to death

In His Majesty's Name

This monstrous reprisal against the twelve Greek patriots evoked a storm of indignation and protest The feelings of the Greek people were shared by all honest men and women of the globe Even before the trial was over meetings were held everywhere in defence of Nikos Belojanis and his comrades The military tribunal received thousands of letters and telegrams protesting vigorously against the terrible crime it was about to commit

These expressions of international solidarity reached their peak after sentence was passed At the suggestion of the Soviet Union the question of saving the lives of the twelve Greek patriots was placed before the 6th Session of the U N General Assembly The Soviet delegation submitted a special draft resolution for negotiations between the chairman of the General Assembly and Greek government spokesmen to press for the annulment of the death sentence by the Athens military tribunal on November 16 1951, against the twelve patriots'

That humane Soviet proposal was turned down by the General Assembly on the prompting of the United States But the worldwide movement on behalf of the victims of fascist terror could hardly be ignored by the Greek ruling clique Premier Plastiras conceded to public pressure by announcing that the military tribunal s verdict would not be put into effect

Subsequent events proved, however, that Plastiras announcement was merely a gesture designed to hoodwink world democratic opinion Urged by the Americans, the Greek government immediately busied itself with another big frame up against the Communists It pretended that a "communist plot" had been uncovered, and that the 'criminal activities" of certain "foreign agents' had to be checked Nikos Belojanis and his comrades were among those implicated in the new trial

This second mock trial against Nikos Belojanis and twenty eight other Greek patriots differed little from the first The sole difference was that the principal charge levelled against the democrats was now changed to that of "espionage" The trimmings were different, but the aim was the same to deny the condemned Belojanis and his comrades the benefit of the amnesty promised by Plastiras, replace the political indictment by a charge of espionage, and so provide "legal" grounds for their execution

The course of the trial made it more than plain that the "case of the 29" had been fabricated from beginning to end by the secret police acting on orders from the U S

What exactly did the indictment say?

It alleged that the police had uncovered the Greek Communist Party's "spy network", of which Nikos Belojanis was the leader, that it had come upon an illegal radio transmitter supposedly used to maintain contacts between the "underground spy centre" and the leadership of the Greek Communist Party, and also that the secret codes and type had been seized A series of faked radiograms from the defendants to "a foreign centre" and other "documents" were produced at the trial as "material evidence"

But it was obvious, even to the uninitiated, that all the "evidence" was false, and that although the charge against the defendants was espionage, they were being tried, as before, for their ideas and political convictions The prosecution did not present a single authentic document to

Nikos Belojanis at his trial

support their charge The only "witness" the police said they had "caught red handed", turned out to be an agent who had collaborated actively with the secret police

The other so called witnesses were police agents too "The witnesses are to a man regular police employees," said Belojanis "They have been hounding us for 25 years The impression is they are here to settle old scores with us "

Hard as the secret police tried, no one believed the defendants to be "spies" who had plotted against their country All attempts to prove this were frustrated by the stoicism and courage of the defendants Belojanis, Ioannidou, Georgiadou, Grammenos and their comrades, who stoutly denied the slanderous charge that members of the Greek Communist Party had engaged in espionage

Belojanis bore himself at the hearings with rare composure and calm In his speech he demolished the reaction's ugly incriminations against the Communists 'Blame for the fact that Greek territory is dotted with graves and ruins rests entirely with the foreign imperialists and their Greek flunkeys," he declared " We believe in the correctness of the theory that has come from the minds of the most progressive men The purpose of our struggle is to make that theory a reality for both Greece and the rest of the world We are fighting that our country may see better days, unclouded by hunger or war If necessary we will sacrifice our lives for that "

The tribunal retired to deliberate Several hours later it delivered its decision "In His Majesty's Name " and again there followed the words of the death sentence for Nikos Belojanis, Elli Ioannidou and six of their comrades

As Long As Our Hearts Beat

All of progressive mankind rallied to the defence of Belojanis and the other condemned patriots Trade unions, women's, youth and other democratic organisations, all kinds

of societies and groups, members of the clergy, prominent social and political figures, scientists, writers and artists protested against this criminal verdict

Speaking to them from their death cells in the Kalifei prison, Nikos Belojanis and his comrades said "Dear, true friends we shall never forget what you are doing for us Your noble efforts to save us from death will fill one of the most wonderful pages in the history of man's fight for a better future in which the fear of hunger and war shall have no place As long as our hearts beat we shall feel bound less gratitude to those who have been working so nobly to tear us from the clutches of our executioners "

But the execution could not be stayed

At three o'clock on the morning of Sunday, March 30, 1952, Belojanis was awakened by a prison warden, the Royal Commissioner Colonel Afanasulis informed him, Kaloume nos, Argiriadis and Bastis that their appeal had been rejected, and Belojanis realised that their hour had struck

There was a priest waiting for the condemned men in the prison courtyard, but Belojanis refused the last rites On leaving the courtyard, he turned around to face the windows of the prison and shouted, "Good bye, comrades!"

The four prisoners were put in a closed car At twenty minutes past three they drove out of the prison gates and proceeded at great speed to the execution site—the Goudi shooting compound The prison, entire route of the journey and shooting grounds were cordoned off by reinforced detach ments of military police and gendarmes

The newspaper *Allagi* reported that Belojanis did not quail on facing his executioners, serenely listened to the sentence, and refused to be blindfolded His comrades follow ed his example

The tragic deed took place at twelve minutes past four, by the glare of the automobile headlights Before the fatal shots were fired Belojanis cried "Long live the Communist Party of Greece!"

The next day the newspapers described the brutal treatment of the bodies After being left on the ground where they had fallen until a quarter to seven in the morning they were transported in an open garbage van to the Kokin Cemetery and without coffins, in prison suits, literally thrown into the wrong graves The mistake was not discovered until the watchman arrived on the scene, when the bodies were dug out and moved to other graves

At noon on March 30, Belojanis's grief stricken mother fell on her knees beside her son's grave, where she had placed a few wild flowers "I had two children," she wept "My daughter was killed by tuberculosis and died in the Sotiria Hospital Several yards from that hospital, my son was shot Instead of two children I now have two graves I curse the murderers of my son I want no other mother to know such dreadful grief "

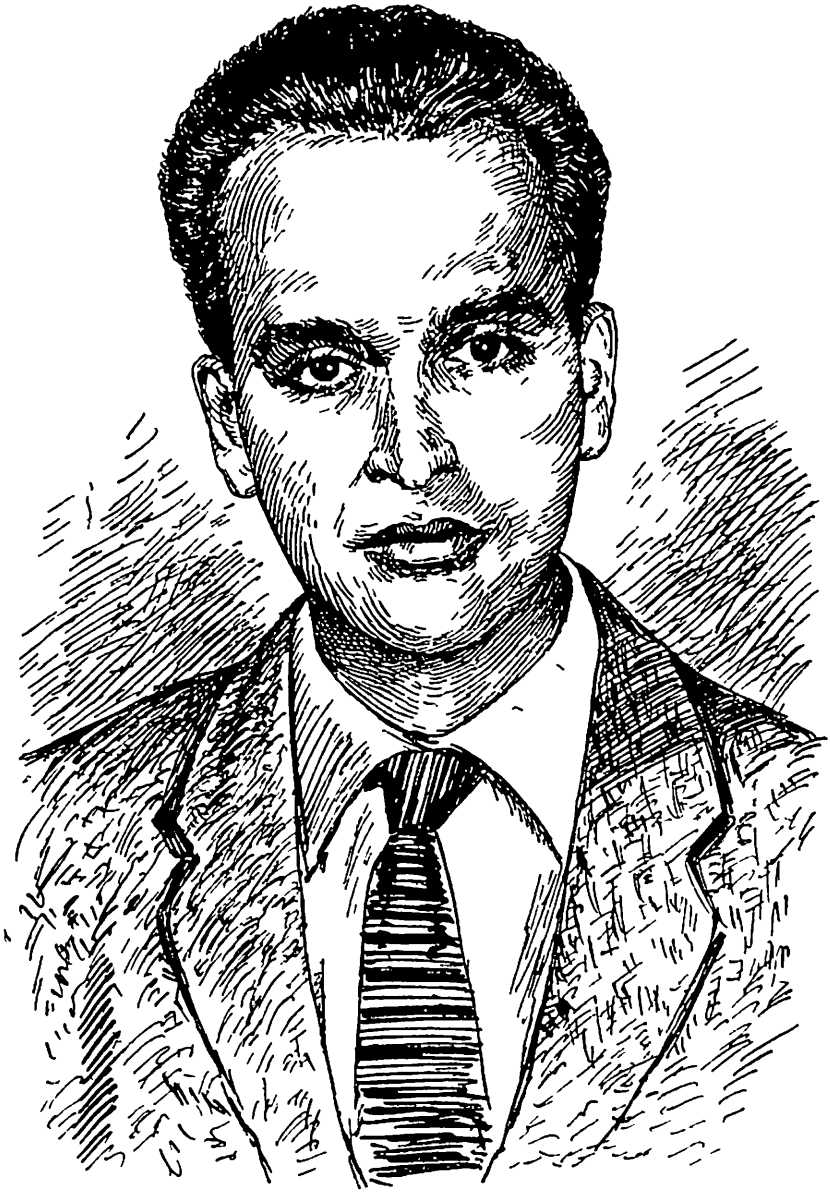
The police guarded the cemetery day and night And yet a day after the burial, a wreath bearing the words "Sleep peacefully, for we are awake!" was laid on Nikos Belojanis' grave

* * *

Belojanis' murderers snuffed out his life But they will never extinguish his glowing image from the hearts of the Greek people for whose happiness he fought and gave his life

Winter and summer, red carnations lie like drops of blood on his modest grave They speak of the homage and love of the plain people of Greece for their heroic son, of the immortal glory of his name

The red carnation Nikos Belojanis held in his hand when the death sentence was pronounced in the courtroom has become a symbol of the struggle the Greek people are waging for their freedom and independence, for the happy future of their long suffering land



Octavio Reyes Ortiz

Octavio Reyes Ortiz

In the late thirties a boy of twelve by the name of Octavio Reyes Ortiz went to work as a printer's "devil" in Guatemala City, the capital of the Guatemalan Republic He had just finished elementary school and his teacher, who thought highly of his ability and saw that he was eager to learn, urged him to continue his studies But that was out of the question Octavio's father, a poor peasant who had spent the better part of his life trying to scratch a living out of a tiny plot of land had finally been driven from the village by poverty Tearing himself up by the roots, he had moved his large family to the capital That did not spell the end of hard times, however Octavio had to take a job to help the family

Industrious and conscientious, Octavio learned the printer's trade quickly enough and spent several years at it His friends at the printshop noticed and encouraged the young worker's rare aptitude with the pencil Octavio had drawn well even as a child His drawings began to appear in the newspapers and magazines With time he became a professional illustrator, a job he liked tremendously It was not given him to practice it long, however Fierce events drew

him into the political struggle that became the great cause to which he thereafter devoted every day of his life

The people had rallied to the struggle against the tyrant Jorge Ubico, who had been ruling the country with an iron hand since 1931 Revolution was brewing Octavio joined the democratic movement and became a member of the Party of Revolutionary Action which united the progressive intel lectuals, factory and white collar workers and students

In June 1944, Ubico had to resign his post, but the regime did not change The triumvirate of generals who succeeded the dictator pursued the same course The people's wrath erupted on October 20, 1944, and the reactionary government was overthrown by force of arms

October 20, 1944 has gone down in the history of Guate mala as the beginning of a new period of struggle for the genuine emancipation of the country The armed rising begun on that day is known as the October Revolution of Guatemala Its political implications were summed up in the constitution proclaimed on March 11, 1945 President Arevalo s government undertook the democratisation of the country and embarked on a number of social reforms A labour code was adopted and the workers' right to unite in trade unions and go on strike was recognised

Octavio Reyes, who was working at the Byron printing plant at the time helped to form a printers' union there When that was done, he and other active members turned their attention to founding a large printers' federation The result was a union of printing trades workers, formed in 1948, in which Reyes was made a functionary

Among the important goals the progressive leaders of the labour movement set themselves was the attainment of working class unity in the fight for the rights of the toil ing people Octavio Reyes vigorously opposed the opportu nistic currents in the trade union movement and exposed certain functionaries erroneous views which hindered the workers from uniting their ranks

The managers of the printing plant where Octavio was employed decided to get rid of the "trouble maker" and Octavio was fired over the protests of his fellow workers He now looked for employment in some government office where he would not be victimised by reactionary employers He found a job at last in the administrative offices of the ore mining industry At the same time he continued his activities in the Guatemalan trade union movement and the Party of Revolutionary Action

Nor was the trade union movement Octavio's only battle field at this time The occasion arose when he was called upon to defend democracy with gun in hand This was in July 1949, when the reactionary army camarilla provoked a putsch and tried to stage a military coup The commander of the Guatemalan Army Francisco Javier Arana was implicated in the plot Citizens' units sprang up in opposition to it, and in the fighting which ensued they were led to victory by Colonel Carlos Paz Tejada, the putsch was defeated Octavio Reyes served in one of the citizens' units

In 1948, the workers, students and progressive intellectuals of Guatemala began to show a lively interest in the study of Marxist Leninist theory Members of the democratic parties and trade unions formed Marxist circles, groups interested in socialist ideas appeared Octavio Reyes helped to start Marxist circles in the Party of Revolutionary Action, then the largest democratic party in the country He himself made a serious study of Marxist literature and helped to popularise it among the masses

In the autumn of 1949, Reyes and a group of comrades took an important step They left the Party of Revolutionary Action to set up a new Marxist Leninist Party

The 1st Congress of the Guatemalan Communist Party opened on September 28, 1949 Octavio Reyes was elected a member of its Central Committee and put in charge of its work among the youth From then on he was a major figure in the Guatemalan youth movement Before long he was

elected a member of the Executive of the Guatemalan Young Communist League, which rallied the young men and women of the country to the support of the agrarian and anti imperialist revolution, and soon gained a big mass following

The Third Student and Youth Festival for Peace and Friendship was approaching, and the young people of Guatemala decided to send a delegation to Berlin Besides Octavio Reyes, the delegation included Hugo Barrios Klee, Huberto Alvarado, Edelberto Torres Rivas and others The Berlin Festival made a lasting impression on Octavio This first meeting with the youth of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries strengthened his belief in the importance of the international solidarity of the working people

Octavio's friends recall that on his return from the Festival he took to avidly reading books about revolutionaries Above all he liked Maxim Gorky s *Mother*, Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered* and Julius Fuçik's *Report from the Gallows*, and he spared no pains to acquaint the young people of Guatemala with these books His work among the youth developed his abilities as a propagandist and organiser The Central Committee of the Guatemalan Communist Party had every reason to regard him as one of the most able members of its Youth Commission

The Quetzal Spread Its Wings

On July 19, 1952, the Guatemalan people celebrated a great victory President Jacobo Arbenz signed Act Number 900, which ushered in the agrarian reform and gave the peasants land One hundred thousand poor peasants and agricultural workers and their families were given plots of their own The government granted them credits to the sum of nine million quetzals (the quetzal is the equivalent of one U S dollar) Workers' wages rose the working people became better organised, and that same year a General Confederation of Guatemalan Labour was established

Living standards improved All over the country people composed couplets in honour of President Arbenz and put them to music "Three cheers for the young colonel, we're for him because he keeps his word to the people!" they sang

The Communist Party of Guatemala also grew in strength and number over this period Its members were extremely active in putting through the agrarian reform and all the other measures undertaken to fortify the anti imperialist and democratic content of the Guatemalan revolution At its 2nd Congress in December 1952, the Communist Party took the name of the Guatemalan Party of Labour

For ten years Guatemala reaped the benefits of this democratic regime The people said that their national symbol of liberty, the quetzal bird (which cannot live in captivity), was spreading its wings for flight

Imperialist Conspiracy

The independent policy of the Guatemalan government invoked the wrath of the powerful North American United Fruit Co The agrarian reform had infringed on the latter's interests its unused lands were taken away from it, after a compensation payment of course The U S State Department and Central Intelligence Agency came to the aid of United Fruit Co A rabid campaign was launched against the Guatemalan government, with slander, vituperation, intimidation and blackmail as its instruments It was accompanied by open preparations for intervention with the aim of overthrowing the Arbenz government U S Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had a hand in that dirty business Strong pressure was brought to bear on the governments of the other Latin Americas by the U S A through its military political blocs, the organisations of American States and Central-American States A reactionary plot was hatched in the regular army, meanwhile the imperialists poured six million dollars into the formation, on the territory of the

neighbouring country of Honduras, of a counter revolutionary army made up of mercenaries and led by the traitor Castillo de Armas, a former colonel of the Guatemalan army On the night of June 17, 1954, the order went out for his mercenaries to invade Guatemala That was to have triggered off the military coup by the high placed traitors in the Guatemalan army

The numerically small Guatemalan Party of Labour left no stone unturned to avert the disaster As soon as it learned of the pending invasion, the Central Committee of the Party sent representatives to the districts bordering on Honduras to organise resistance to the aggressor At Puerto Barrios the Party spearheaded the patriotic upsurge by forming armed detachments whose purpose it was to stop the invaders These patriotic forces scored a major victory, wiping out a group of mercenaries who were trying to effect a landing from aboard the *Siesta de Trujillo* Similar resistance units were organised by the G P L in other departments

Even before the beginning of the intervention, Octavio Reyes had been sent to the department of Chiquimula on the Honduras border, with instructions from the Party to strengthen the defence of the area Helped by the local Party branch, he formed people's military units and furnished them with arms, which he was able to secure only by outwitting the traitor officers He also organised the military training of the workers and peasants attached to these units

And so when the bands of Castillo de Armas, abetted by the treachery of the officers in deliberately withdrawing their forces from the border, reached Chiquimula, they found these people s units waiting for them Short as they were of arms and ammunition, the defenders of the town held their ground and repulsed all the invaders' attacks

On June 22, the aggressors brought in planes They met with no resistance in the air, the U S State Department's policy of boycott and blockade having made it impossible for the Guatemalan government to secure military planes

for purposes of defence American bombers levelled the town with the ground, and on the following day it passed into the hands of the invaders

Octavio Reyes and his comrades rushed to the capital to warn the Party leadership of these developments But it was too late The treachery of the top army echelon forced President Arbenz out, and in his place came a military junta On July 3, 1954, Castillo de Armas' bands entered the capital

Deep Underground

The Guatemalan Party of Labour was outlawed, the Communists were brutally hounded At its last congress the Guatemalan Party of Labour admitted that it had made a mistake in failing to foresee the possibility of the defeat of the democratic regime and not preparing to carry on the struggle in illegal conditions It paid heavily for that mistake Hundreds of Communists fell victim to the terror unleashed by the bands of Castillo de Armas and the resurgent reaction A number of Guatemalan patriots had to seek refuge in the Mexican embassy and leave the country Among them was Comrade Octavio He left his native land with a heavy heart But he knew that he would be back soon

Indeed he did not remain in emigration long As soon as he could establish the necessary contacts (five months after the overthrow of the democratic regime) he returned to Guatemala illegally To the difficulties of crossing the mountains along the border was added the risk of falling into the hands of the police Octavio was one of the first to cross the border and resume his militant post

The Central Committee of the Party assigned him to organisational work One of his main jobs was that of planning the illegal return of Communists and other democrats to Guatemala, and bringing in Marxist-Leninist and propaganda literature from abroad From then on the name of Octavio Reyes was no longer heard It had been changed

to the conspiratorial pseudonym of Comrade Pepe Scores of Guatemalan Communists who came home illegally have gratefully acknowledged their debt to Comrade Pepe, the man who arranged their return Hundreds of consignments of literature acquainting the masses with the great ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin were smuggled into Guatemala over secret routes mapped by Comrade Pepe In the performance of this difficult and responsible work Comrade Pepe risked his life day after day But thanks to him the Party gained strength, for many patriots were able to return to their native land and hundreds of new members swelled the ranks of the Party and Patriotic Young Workers, as the Guatemalan communist youth organisation was known

Publishing the Guatemalan *Pravda*

The growing scale of the Party's work brought with it the crying need for a Party newspaper The Guatemalan people had a right to hear what the Communists could tell them, to learn the truth about the Soviet Union and the struggle of the fraternal peoples against capitalism and colonial exploitation

The Central Committee of the Party decided to launch the regular publication of a central Party organ, the newspaper *Verdad*, which like the Russian word 'Pravda", means 'truth" Comrade Pepe's experience as a printer stood him in good stead He acquitted himself brilliantly in this new assignment from the Central Committee By the end of 1954, the workers, peasants and students were reading and passing on to one another the small mimeographed sheet that acquainted the masses with the militant ideas of Guatemala's Communists But it came out only in a few copies, and the mimeographed letters were hard to read It was necessary to improve the appearance of the Party newspaper In October 1956, the Central Committee asked Comrade Pepe to organise the publication of a printed newspaper

'It will not be easy," the comrades in the Political Com mission of the Central Committee admitted "But we are sure you can do it "

'Very well, comrades, we shall have a printed newspaper," said Comrade Pepe

For several days no one saw anything of Pepe, not even his closest friends and relatives To be sure, his visits to his parental home had always been few and far between, as there was no knowing when the police might be waiting for him there He knew that his parents' life was hard, but he was giving all his time to Party work and could not help them financially

"All I can give them is advice," he told his comrades sadly

One night Comrade Pepe turned up at the secret meeting place in high spirits, singing his favourite Chilean song "Two Ends to the Road"

"Hello everybody! What's new? Oh, we ve been quite busy, working and riding to Quezaltenango and back by bus But we're going to have a newspaper!" Pepe puffed his ciga rette and let out a cloud of smoke "Wouldn t you like to see it—just?" He winked slyly

"Are you joking, Pepe? What can you show us so soon?" one of the comrades asked

"Not at all In fact, I can hardly wait to show it to you Look!"

Pepe slipped a hand under his jacket and drew out a bun dle of freshly printed newspapers

"This is *Verdad*, our *Pravda* Read it, friends It is small in format and not illustrated, and the print isn't as good as we'd like—but it's the best we could manage with a hand press Still, it's not bad for a beginning The main thing is that we're coming out in a big edition Tomorrow several thousand people will be reading the first issue of our printed newspaper And now let s decide how to get it to the mem bership first thing in the morning "

From the day he had received his new assignment till this same evening, Pepe and the two Communists helping him hadn't slept a wink First of all, they had to get together a set of type from different printshops, a bit here and a bit there Then they composed and made up the pages, drew and cast the headlines After that it remained only to haul the heavy bundles of plates to the home of a friend, where the disassembled parts of a hand press were hidden And what about the problem of getting paper? Who says it s easy to get newspaper stock when all the shopowners have been strictly warned under no circumstances to sell it without the permission of the police?

We found the solution to some of our problems in the book *An Underground Regional Committee at Work* I reread it several days ago Good for Fyodorov, he knew a thing or two!" Pepe exclaimed "The important thing is to get a start The Russian comrades managed jobs like this not only during the war against fascism, but long before that, under tsarism, when things were much harder If they could do it, so can we "

That was how the newspaper *Verdad*, which was printed illegally on a hand press, appeared and became the militant propagandist and organiser of the Guatemalan toiling masses Comrade Pepe, alias Octavio Reyes Ortiz, was its manager, type setter, printer and distributor The truth about the struggle of the Guatemalan working people began to reach wider and wider sections of the population

On the heels of *Verdad*, the Guatemalan Party of Labour began to publish an organisational bulletin called *El Militante* as well as the theoretical journal *Experiencias* And although the name of Octavio Reyes did not appear under the articles, many Communists knew what a big role Comrade Pepe had played in the organisation of the Party press

Early in 1962, the Guatemalan people intensified their struggle against the dictatorial regime Big demonstrations were held in the capital throughout March and April workers,

professional people, college and high school students moved by the side of their teachers in fearless columns against the lines of policemen and soldiers armed with tommy and machine guns Barricades rose in the streets A guerilla movement got under way simultaneously in the rural areas A division named the 13th of November Guerilla Front of Alejandro de Leon, in honour of the dead leader of the revolt that broke out in a number of army units on November 13, 1960, launched operations in the northeastern part of Guatemala Another group took the name of the 20th of October Guerilla Front, in honour of the revolution of October 1944, and was led by Colonel Carlos Paz Tejada, the same Guatemalan patriot who in 1949 had put down the counter-revolutionary putsch As in 1949, Comrade Pepe again fought at his side

The manifesto issued by that front called for the overthrow of the reactionary Ydigoras Fuentes government It said, in part "The patient and long-suffering Guatemalan people have tried all possible peaceful and legal means of ending the vice, violence, crime and treachery of the Ydigoras regime, but the tyrant and his camarilla have always returned to their old policy of increasing persecution of the people The only way left is rebellion "

To support the 13th of November Front, a detachment of patriots belonging to the 20th of October Front was dispatched from the capital to the former's field of operations Communist Octavio Reyes took his place in the detachment On March 13, the detachment pitched camp to the east of the Guatemala Coban Road in the municipality of Grenados, about 75 miles from the capital There it was unexpectedly surrounded by an infantry company from the Guardia de Honor Regiment The numerically superior and better equipped enemy forces unleashed a hurricane of fire from tommy and machine guns and minethrowers, and the guerillas sustained heavy losses They tried to break through the encirclement in small groups, but many failed to get away

Incited by their officers, the soldiers wreaked brutal vengeance on the patriots Six were mowed down by machine gun fire when they emerged from their hiding places, and their bodies were hacked to pieces with machetes, the knives used for cutting sugar cane The next day, on combing the area around the town of Concua, a platoon of soldiers mur dered another four guerillas Three of the captured patriots were killed "while trying to escape" Their bodies were so mutilated that not even their relatives could identify them

Such was the treatment the fighters for the freedom and happiness of the Guatemalan people received at the hands of the reaction On May 20, 1962, the newspaper *Verdad* published a tribute to the exploit of the patriots who were martyred on March 13 and 14 in that unequal contest "Those who raised our glorious banner in the mountains, a banner upheld by many, were confirmed revolutionaries The names of the dead inspire all who seek freedom, progress and just ice for the Guatemalan people to join in the struggle *Verdad* is publishing the immortal names of thirteen of the heroes The list opens with the name of a great comrade and devoted champion of democracy and national independence, a mem ber of the Central Committee of the Party

Octavio Reyes
Mauro de Leon
Carlos Toledo
Atado Izquierdo
Alfonso Jocol
Julio Caceres
Brasil Hernandez
Marcial Asturias
Jaime Reyes
Rodolfo Eller
Juan Francisco Barrios
Moises Quilo
Guillermo Grajeda

Ydigoras Fuentes did not retain his post long after the crisis of spring 1962 The reaction found him "too weak' On March 30, 1963, Colonel Peralta Asurdia, the War Minister, announced the president s resignation A military junta headed by the same Peralta Asurdia, a man who prided himself on his record in crushing popular action, took over In March and April 1962, an army and police force acting on his orders killed over fifty patriots and wounded several hundred more His government passed laws which had been vetoed by Congress even during the Ydigoras Fuentes dictatorship One was the Law in Defence of Democratic Institutions, a cynical mockery of the very concept of democracy, which set the penalty for membership in communist organisations at ten years' imprisonment But the Guatemalan people are not to be intimidated by such draconic laws They are beginning to see more and more clearly that democracy can only be restored in stubborn, unremitting struggle That struggle continues

In the spring of 1963, Peralta Asurdia announced that the guerilla movement had been crushed Nothing could be further from the truth Guatemalan patriots are still active and their guerilla detachments are still busy The government has used Moustang and B 26 planes supplied by the United States in a futile attempt to wipe them out The mounting insurrectionist movement has the support of the 13th of November Revolutionary Movement, the 20th of October and 12th of April movement In April 1963, an insurgent unit occupied the barracks at Esquimo, in the Izabel state Almost all the soldiers of the garrison joined up with the guerillas Another unit captured the settlement of Chinos, not far from Entre Rios Still another forced the garrison in the village of Cayuga to surrender

Feeling its approaching end the reaction is lashing out at the rebels with even greater fury than before In April 1963, the military authorities of the Puerto Barrios district

shot down ten workers and passed off their bodies for those of guerillas A similar hoax was put over in May 1963, when the military authorities of the state of Zakapa arrested five young people who had no connections with the guerillas and sentenced them to death The mass protest movement with which the Guatemalan people reacted to that crime made the government withdraw the sentence

The Communists have invariably marched in the fore front of the struggle against tyranny Despite heavy losses, the Guatemalan Party of Labour has been gaining in numbers and strength, and its prestige and influence on the masses have risen The decisions of the 3rd Congress of the Party, held in 1960, stressed that "the Party must master all methods of struggle without exception " That principle takes on particular importance at times of outright military dictatorship

Comrade Pepe is dead, but the *Verdad* still comes out Its circulation has grown, and it is now a regular weekly Although dozens of prominent union leaders have been thrown into prison, the trade unions are fighting on

Substantial headway has been made in uniting all the progressive forces of the Guatemalan people In July 1963, the revolutionary parties, among them the Guatemalan Party of Labour, decided to join hands in resisting the military dictatorship and creating a United Resistance Front The statement issued by the Front stresses that the common aim of all Guatemalans is to overthrow the despotic regime and restore democracy That alone can expedite the solution of the fun damental problems of the nation and ensure its economic, social and political development

The courageous Guatemalan people are becoming more class conscious and organised Every day new heroes come forward who, like Octavio Reyes Ortiz, are ready to give their lives without stint to the fight for the country's emancipation from the stranglehold of the North American monopolies and their minions The Guatemalan people believe that the quetzal bird will be free

Ajoy Kumar Ghosh

Ajoy Kumar Ghosh

n November 1928 Assistant Superintendent of Police Saunders was killed in Lahore Several months later in the spring of 1929, a bomb exploded in the Central Assembly immediately after the passage of an anti labour law The terrorists who committed the act were Bhagat Singh and B C Dutt, both were apprehended on the spot and sentenced to hard labour for life Soon afterwards the police discovered a bomb factory, and further arrests followed Many of the leaders of an organisation operating in the Punjab, Bihar and the United Provinces found themselves behind prison bars

July 1929 saw the opening of their trial, which held the attention of the Indian people for many months to come

In the dock, besides Bhagat Singh, the leader of the terrorists (already sentenced for life), the colonialists had arraigned twelve of his comrades in what was known as the Second Lahore Conspiracy Case One of the twelve was 20 year-old Ajoy Kumar Ghosh

* * *

A male child was born on February 20, 1909, into the family of Sachindranath Ghosh, a physician who lived in Mihijam, a village nestling on the bank of a swift flowing river The little boy was named Ajoy ("the invincible") after the river Not long afterwards the family moved to Cawnpore There Ajoy's childhood and adolescence passed, further details of this period of his life are not known to us We do know, however, that at the age of fifteeen he already dreamed of revolution and admired the martyrs of 1915 1916 who tried to organise an armed revolt against British rule It was at that age (in 1923) that he made the acquaintance of Bhagat Singh, a young man who shared his views They spoke at length of the necessity of expelling the British invaders from India, of their desire to rouse the people and take action Ghosh and his friends opened a gymnasium where they not only engaged in physical culture, but also recruited supporters

In 1926, Ajoy Ghosh went to Allahabad to enter the chemistry department of the university Several years later he received his Bachelor's degree In 1928, he again met Bhagat Singh, then the leader of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association That underground organisation espoused the goal of turning India into a socialist country by means of individual and group terror "Terrorism, armed action against the enemies of the people, we were convinced, was indispensable to rouse the nation," Ajoy Ghosh later recalled

The decline that set in after the upsurge of the popular movement of 1921 1922 led many of its participants to succumb to feelings of frustration and pessimism The national bourgeoisie, then the most mature class politically, had displayed inconsistency and timidity, and in its struggle for Swaraj or self government had limited itself to the tactics of non violent resistance That could not satisfy the radical

ly-minded youth, who longed for decisive action "We had lost faith in the existing national leadership, its constitutionalism, its slogan of boring from within disgusted us," wrote Ghosh It was essential to wrest the people from "the grip of fear' As he said, 'When the stagnant calm was broken by a series of hammer blows delivered by us at selected points and on suitable occasions against the most hated officials of the government, and mass movement unleashed, we would link ourselves with that movement, act as its armed detachment, and give it a socialist direction " Such was the platform of the terrorists, and they acted in accordance with it

Arrests did not weaken the leaders of the Association Practically all of them showed remarkable fortitude and by their conduct during the trial and their speeches in the courtroom conveyed their contempt for the colonial government, its court and police They did their utmost to use the trial to further their political aims They declared a hunger strike, demanding that the political prisoners be given separate quarters and better conditions

The hunger strike lasted over two months and had tremendous repercussions throughout the country Ghosh described it as follows 'For ten days nothing big happened Hunger grew and with it physical weakness Some had to take to bed after a week, and, as the trial continued, it was a real strain for them to sit in the courtroom After ten days, forcible feeding was started We were all in separate cells at that time Accompanied by a number of tough and strong *Nam bardars* (convict overseers), the doctors came to each cell, the hunger striker was thrown on a mattress, a rubber tube was forcibly pushed into his nostril and the milk poured into it

"Many were the methods we devised to defeat the doctors Kishori swallowed red pepper and boiling water to cause sore throat so that the passage of the tube led to such coughing that it had to be taken out lest he might die of suffocation

I swallowed flies immediately after forced feeding to induce vomiting These devices came to be known to the doctors, and guards were kept on us

"Determined to break us, the jail officials removed all water from our cells and placed milk instead in the pitchers This was the worst ordeal imaginable After a day, thirst grew unbearably I would drag myself towards the pitcher, hoping every time to find water, but draw back at the sight of milk It was maddening If the man who had hit upon this device had been there before me, I would have killed him

"Outside the guard sat—watching every movement—mute, impassive "

The prisoners went on two more hunger strikes before the trial ended Their refusal to submit to humiliating orders resulted in physical clashes with the police and adjournments of the court proceedings The Viceroy issued a Special Ordnance providing that the Lahore Conspiracy Case should be heard without lawyers, defence witnesses and even without the presence of the accused in the courtroom

Sentence was passed in October 1930 Bhagat Singh and two others were condemned to death, and the rest to life or other long prison terms Ajoy Ghosh was acquitted for lack of evidence

The fate of his friends grieved him deeply, he always remembered Bhagat Singh and many other defendants in the Lahore trial with undiminishing warmth and love

On his release from prison, Ghosh returned to Cawnpore, where he divided his time between his trade union work and reading He read voluminously, " whatever books I could get " It was at this time that he made a new friend, Sardesai—the first Communist he came to know intimately If before he had been troubled by doubts as to the correctness of the methods of struggle he had adopted, he now began to see that only a mass movement could lead to a revolutionary uprising This conviction became definitely fixed in his mind when, on being arrested again, chance brought him and

Sardesai together for several weeks in the same prison barrack

Their talks and his careful study of Marxist literature made Ghosh a confirmed Communist The revolutionary-terrorist became a revolutionary Marxist, the rest of his life illumined by the ideas of Marx and Lenin In 1933, when he was next released from prison, he was elected a member of the National Council of the Communist Party, and in 1936—of its Political Bureau

In July 1934, the Communist Party was outlawed, and its leaders had to do real yeoman's service to preserve the militancy of its ranks Their position was trying in the extreme, for a long time Ajoy Ghosh, like the other leaders of the Party, laboured under great difficulties The rules of underground work had to be strictly observed, they had to remember that their every move was being closely watched On one occasion Ajoy Ghosh eluded arrest by a hair's breadth The Party centre had charged him with organising the escape of an arrested Communist in the city of Bijapur The assignment was successfully carried out and the two got into the train without undue trouble Ajoy posed as a government official and the escaped man as his servant Not far from Hyderabad, a police officer began to display more than passing interest in their persons Ghosh did not lose his presence of mind He introduced himself as an inspector in the excise office, and bore himself with such ease and self confidence that the police officer's suspicions were dispelled

In the middle of the thirties the Party started a drive to strengthen its influence in the mass organisations of the working people It had its effect The Indian proletariat intensified the struggle for its rights

In 1937, some 650,000 workers came out on strike, 40,000 textile workers took part in the communist led strike in Cawnpore

When, in 1938, the weekly *National Front* began to promulgate socialist ideas among the progressive section of In-

dian society, Ajoy Ghosh became a member of its editorial board His articles for the weekly showed that the Party had gained a talented publicist and distinguished propagandist of Marxism Leninism

During the Second World War, the Communist Party was again driven underground, and again there followed months of life and work under illegal conditions But Ghosh carried on with the same tireless energy, writing for the newspaper *Communist* and other Party publications, directing Party work and reading avidly His energy and perseverance gained the admiration of his comrades He was critical of everything that distracted them from the goal For a while he and two other Party leaders lived in an old abandoned house They took turns in preparing the meals When it was Ghosh's turn his comrades were usually served unpalatable burnt dishes for the "cook" was absorbed in his next article for the Party press, or busy studying some new material Ascetic in his habits, he cared little for personal comfort and things that seemed to him of minor importance

This enforced period of concealment weighed heavily on Ghosh After a while he left for the province of Uttar Pradesh to carry out a Party assignment In 1940, the British colonial authorities came on his trail, arrested him and sent him to the Deoli prison camp While there he organised a long hunger strike against the maltreatment of political prisoners

The pressure of public opinion finally led to his release by the British in 1942 But the long confinement had broken his health When his friends learned that he had contracted tuberculosis, they persuaded him to enter a clinic But he left it after several months despite the categorical objections of the doctors in order to resume his work

In 1946, the colonialists provoked clashes between the Hindus and Muslims as part of their preparations for the partition of the country, and bloody shambles began in the Punjab On arriving there, Ajoy Ghosh went from city to city and

village to village explaining to the people that the pogroms were the doing of the colonialists, that Hindus and Muslims were brothers and had no reason to hate each other While there, he also directed the merger of the separate Party groups into one Communist Party organisation of the Punjab

A happy event in Ghosh s personal life also took place while he was in the Punjab It was in Lahore, a city that otherwise held unpleasant memories for him, that he married Litto Rai, a Communist and active promoter of the women's movement Litto knew that she could not look forward to a tranquil married life with Ghosh And so it was, a few months later her husband landed in the Yervada prison

The prison doctor attested that the tall, thin inmate with the Socratic forehead was critically ill But morning after morning, no matter how unwell he felt, Ghosh got up from his hard bed, and, according to his warder, spent every waking moment reading or writing

What did he write about? He and the friends at his side were alarmed by the situation obtaining in the country The scanty news that seeped in to them from outside indicated that by no means all Communists correctly understood the new tactical tasks confronting the Party after India's attain ment of political independence The situation was compli cated

The movement for independence had been led by the Indian national bourgeoisie The Communist Party's role in that struggle had been that of a true champion of the people's interests, its members had shown themselves to be brave and self sacrificing fighters for freedom Yet the working class, led by the Party, had been the most heroic participant, but not the leader of the struggle At the current stage of the Indi an revolution, which was anti imperialist and anti feudal in character, the Communists considered the unification of all national patriotic forces crucial to the solution of the in- tricate problems of the country's regeneration Certain lead ers of the Party deviated from that correct tactical line, how

ever, their reason being that in independent India the national bourgeoisie and its party, the Indian National Congress, had relinquished their anti imperialist stand and gone over entirely to the imperialist camp These leaders accordingly declared the independence won in 1947 a "fiction", defined the given stage of the revolution as people's democracy and said that the chief objective was to overthrow the national bourgeois government

Ghosh's comment on this was that if the Party wanted to move ahead it would have to get rid of such sectarianism and adventurism and curb the tendency to exaggerate its influence, that it would have to put an end once and for all to the anti-Marxist, anti Leninist substitution of wishful thinking for real facts

When Ghosh came out of prison in July 1950, he was in very bad physical condition He complained in one of his letters that he was running a constant fever with headaches "I can neither sit up, nor write, nor even read," he said The doctor had advised him to take treatments and rest more But it was not in his nature to rest for long Again he threw himself into the fight to correct the mistakes in the Party's tactics and consolidate its ranks With M V Ghatt and S A Dange he drew up political theses presenting a Marxist analysis of the disposition of class forces in India Oblivious to fatigue, he travelled widely up and down the country, addressing meetings, talking to workers, peasants and students Thanks to his acute political insight he played an outstanding role in the organisational consolidation of the Indian Communist Party and in steering it along the right political course In the fight against the Left sectarian deviation—the chief danger that beset the working class movement of India at that time—he proved himself a distinguished theoretician and Party leader who could creatively apply Marxist theory to Indian realities, as well as a civic leader of great discernment and understanding of the undercurrents of political life

A K Ghosh among pioneers

In October 1951, Ajoy Ghosh was elected General Secretary of the National Council of the Indian Communist Party, a post he held to the end of his life

He published a number of articles in the early fifties "The Communist Party of India in Struggle for a United Democratic Front, for a People's Democratic Government" (1951), "Some of Our Main Weaknesses" (1952), "Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of India" (1954), "On the Decisions of the National Council" (1955) The necessity of uniting the patriotic forces of the country is the idea that runs through them all He sounded this call for unity to the whole nation the workers, peasants, intellectuals and patriotically minded

bourgeoisie, to all national groups, to Hindustanis and Bengalis, Gujaratis and Marathis, Tamils and Punjabis, to people of all religious creeds, to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, to the entire population of the country from the Himalayas to the port of Cochin Such unity would rest on the common desire of the wide masses to see the end of colonialism and the war danger, to defeat the internal reaction and put through progressive social reforms, to prevent the penetration of American influence to all spheres of the country s life, and to strengthen friendly relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries

The scale, extent and ultimate success of the democratic movement would depend on the degree to which the wide masses of people and all classes capable of promoting the cause of progress took a part in it The main and indispensable condition for the effectivity of the united front was leadership by the proletariat, the most revolutionary and organised class of society

Ghosh was much concerned to activate the Party's work among the peasants as the most consistent and militant allies of the working class He gave the Party the slogan to "turn its face towards the peasantry"

In his interesting article "On the Indian Bourgeoisie" (1955), Ghosh wrote "The entire history of the Indian national liberation movement has confirmed its *intermediate* position between imperialism and revolution The class as a whole wants independent capitalist development

"Again, the class as a whole wants to carry through this capitalist development by a) strengthening its positions vis a vis imperialism, b) by curbing feudalism, c) by simultaneously maintaining its links and compromise with British capital and alliance with the landlords, d) by throwing the burden of this development on the mass of the people This is the general policy "

When the Indian bourgeoisie is in power, he said, the working people come into conflict with it in their struggle

for their rights But on such an issue as defence of peace the progressive forces can agree to a united front with the bourgeoisie

To Ghosh readiness for joint action never connoted a departure from Marxism Leninism of from the need to uphold the proletariat s vanguard role He was strongly opposed to compromise and conceded the possibility of alliance only in keeping with Party principle

Many of his writings, as Theories and Practice of the Socialist Party of India", 'The New Ideology of 'Democratic Socialism'", and Crishak Mazdur Praja Party—Socialist Merger, Whom Will It Serve?" dealt with the relation of the Communists to the Socialist Party of India In his practical work, Ghosh tried over and over again to come to an under standing with the leaders of that party, but the latter refused to cooperate with the Communists Ghosh criticised the views of the Right Socialist leaders Lohia, Ashoka Mehta and Narayan, who in effect were out to bury Marxism and demon strated that the protracted crisis in the Socialist Party, reflec ted in the bankruptcy of its ideology, tactics and organisa tion, was due to the reluctance of its leadership to take a stand in defence of the working people s rights, and also to its desire to function as a party of parliamentary opposition and constitutional struggle

One of the decisions of the 60th Session of the National Congress held in the town of Avadi in 1955 called for the establishment 'of a socialist pattern of society" in India There were progressive minded individuals who had suc cumbed to the illusion that the national bourgeoisie were capable of leading society to socialism

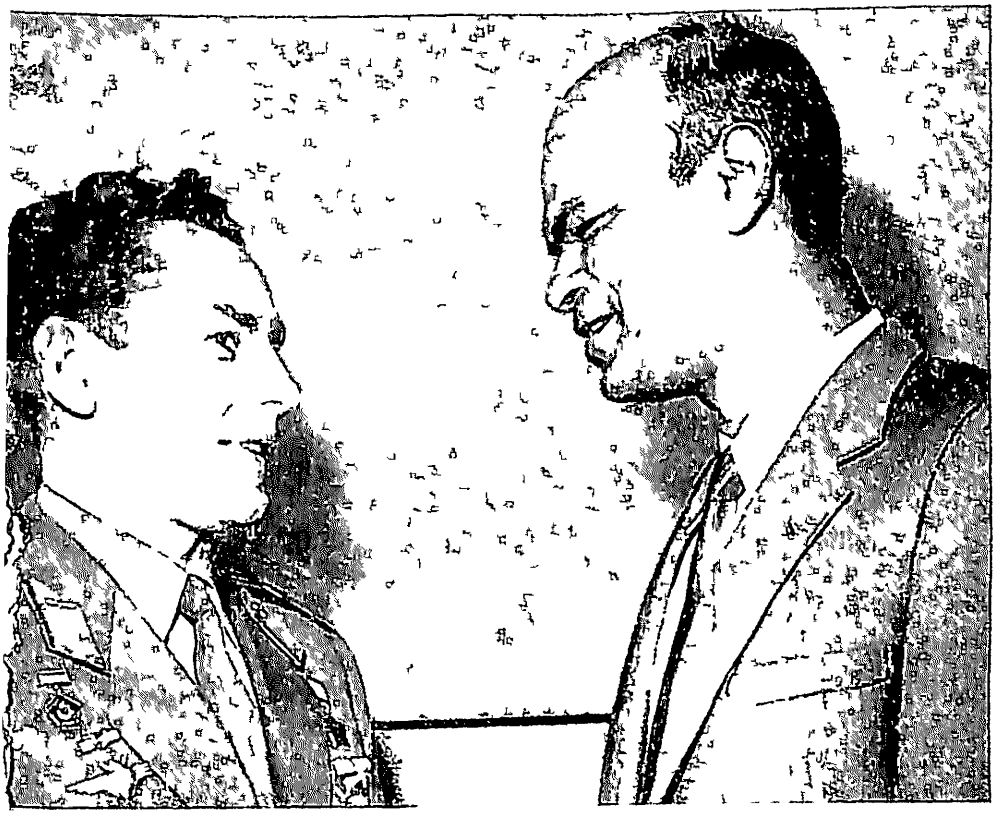
Ghosh pointed out in his articles 'Questions of Theory" and "On India's Path of Development", written in 1956, that the policy of the present ruling classes of the Indian Re public was taking the country along the path of capitalist development To be sure, the growth of the state sector in in- dustry and programme of industrialisation implemented by

the government objectively served to strengthen the country's economy But the fact remained that the bourgeoisie sought to foist the burden of the expenditures connected with such development onto the working people He therefore concluded that socialism could be established only through conquest of power by the working people led by the working class, that bourgeoisie or landlords could not establish socialism and that there could be no socialism unless the working people wielded state power

This Marxist principle defines the attitude of the Communist Party to the government, an attitude of opposition to the anti popular reactionary aspects of its activity, and support for its progressive undertakings As for the further development of a mass movement in the country, in his speech at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of India, its General Secretary said "National Democracy is a correct slogan for our country "

From the very beginning of his activity as General Secretary of the Party, Ghosh attached great importance to the organisational consolidation of the Party and improvement of its ideological work among the members After the achievement of independence a marked move to the Left was noted among the masses, who had tested their strength and come to know the exhilaration of freedom from the colonial yoke The ideas of progress and the necessity of social change gripped the wide sections of the people The Party was given the opportunity to function legally under democratic conditions All that brought the organisational question even more sharply to the fore "And whatever form the struggle takes," said Ghosh, 'the masses can hope for victory only if their own vanguard is also organised in a highly centralised manner "

That is why the role of the special Congress held in Amritsar in 1958, which discussed organisational changes and adopted a new Party Charter, was so great The organisational changes were aimed at strengthening democracy within



A K Ghosh and G S Titov

the Party, broadening the leading bodies, and, above all, turning the Party into a mass, militant organisation of the working class

Ajoy Ghosh often stressed that the latter was possible only if its members were true to Marxism Leninism and firmly resisted opportunism of all hues, strengthened discipline and guarded their unity

All of Ajoy Ghosh's practical and theoretical activity marked him out as a consistent internationalist He denoun ced national insularity "We regard the spirit and concept of internationalism as one of the most precious assets that the communist movement has given humanity " The Commun

ist Parties have a common objective—the establishment of communism, a common ideology—Marxism Leninism a common immediate task—the fight for world peace, freedom and equality of the peoples "Marxism Leninism," said Ghosh, 'has always taught and the experience of recent years has re emphasised that the unity and solidarity of the communist movement—inside each country and on an international scale—are factors of paramount importance '

Ghosh took part in the 1957 and 1960 meetings of the fraternal Communist Parties held in Moscow, and headed the Indian Communist Party delegations to the 20th, 21st and 22nd congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

He was a true friend of the Soviet Union from the very first 'The triumph of the November Revolution, the consolidation of the socialist regime in Russia and more than any thing else, the aid given by the Soviet Union to Asiatic countries against the imperialist powers attracted us towards the new socialist state and towards the ideas and principles it embodied", he related in his recollections of the mood of the revolutionary youth of the twenties 'Studies in prison (the reference is to the Lahore prison—*Ed*) deepened the love that we already cherished for the Soviet Union, and on the occasion of the 1930 anniversary of the November Revolution we sent greetings to the Soviet Union, hailing its victories and pledging support to the Soviet state against all enemies "

Later on he repeatedly stressed that the Indian people had true friends in the Soviet Union and socialist countries and that for independent India, which still had a long struggle ahead for the eradication of the gloomy heritage of colonialism, the anti imperialist stand of a great state like the Soviet Union was of paramount importance

Speaking at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he said "Every step that takes the USSR towards communism also enhances its capacity to de-

A K Ghosh with other delegates to the *22nd* Congress of the C P S U

feat imperialist efforts to export counter revolution and to render aid and assistance to countries which have thrown off the foreign yoke and are striving to rebuild their economy The advance of the USSR along the path of communism simul taneously strengthens the cause of national independence in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America This has been strikingly demonstrated in the events of the last few years

"But the significance of the Draft Programme for the coun tries of Asia and Africa is not confined to this aspect alone It has another and deeper significance

"Once backward Russia has within four decades reached a stage when it can be proclaimed with confidence that the present generation of the Soviet people shall live under com

munism This stupendous fact cannot but exercise profound influence on the mind of the people of Asia and Africa and strengthen their struggle for thorough going democratic re forms It cannot but draw them towards Marxism Leninism, towards socialism "

Ajoy Kumar Ghosh was a devoted and steadfast disciple of Lenin "To this radical and revolutionary transformation," he wrote, "no single individual has contributed nearly as much as Lenin By his mmortal teachings, his titanic organising and political work Lenin stood out even in his lifetime as the greatest builder of the modern world—the beginning of the real history of humanity " Ghosh regarded fidelity to Leninism and the struggle for the purity of that immortal teaching as an indispensable condition for the existence of any genuine Communist Party He revered Lenin not only as the leader of the workers of the whole world, but also as a man

Ghosh himself was distinguished by a rare singleness of purpose, staunchness of spirit and readiness to accept sacrifice for the cause His overwhelming passion was his love for his country And these qualities were happily wed to a warm, kind and considerate nature Ordinarily reticent and reserved he was sociable and gay with his friends, who knew him as an interesting and clever conversationalist He was a great book lover, and as his wife said, "he read voraciously'

Ghosh knew no better pastime than playing with children 'Ajoy was most at home with children," his wife recalled, "in whose company his shyness completely left him His fund of stories and personal experiences thrilled the imagination of many a youngster

"He would often say that he never knew how incomplete life was without children "

* * *

Big political conflicts opened the year 1962 in India, where the third general elections were being held The reac-

A. K. Ghosh with his wife Litto and son Arun

tion had come out into the open. The new party of the Right wing, Swatantra, had dragged out the ragged banner of anti-communism. Blocs and groups uniting reactionaries of every ilk on the basis of blind hatred for the Communist Party appeared. The bourgeoisie and landlords gave their energies and money without stint to win the vote.

Ajoy Ghosh moved in the thick of the masses during this period. Despite his poor health and the warnings of his physicians, he journeyed to the state of Bihar, hotbed of Rightist forces. His oratory drew thousands of people to the meetings he addressed. Listening to the inspiring speeches by the leader of the main anti-government Party, the people of Bihar did not know that he was gravely ill.

On January 8, after one of the meetings, Ghosh called on a sick friend He laughed and joked to cheer up his friend, and discussed plans to consolidate the Party in Bihar Three days later, he was stricken in the middle of the night, and friends took him to the Sena hospital in Delhi

He died at three thirty on the afternoon of January 13 1962 The life of an eminent champion of the happiness of the Indian people a great leader of their working class had sadly ended

Early in the morning crowds of people—factory workers, office employees, teachers students and with them peasants from remote villages—began to move towards the building which housed the parliamentary group of the Communist Party in Delhi

The deceased's body was covered with a red banner and was almost hidden by bouquets of fresh flowers The solemn funeral procession began at 10 20 a m and lasted more than three hours, as the people, heads bowed in grief, paid homage to their departed leader At 2 p m the body of Ajoy Kumar Ghosh was cremated on the bank of the Jamna River

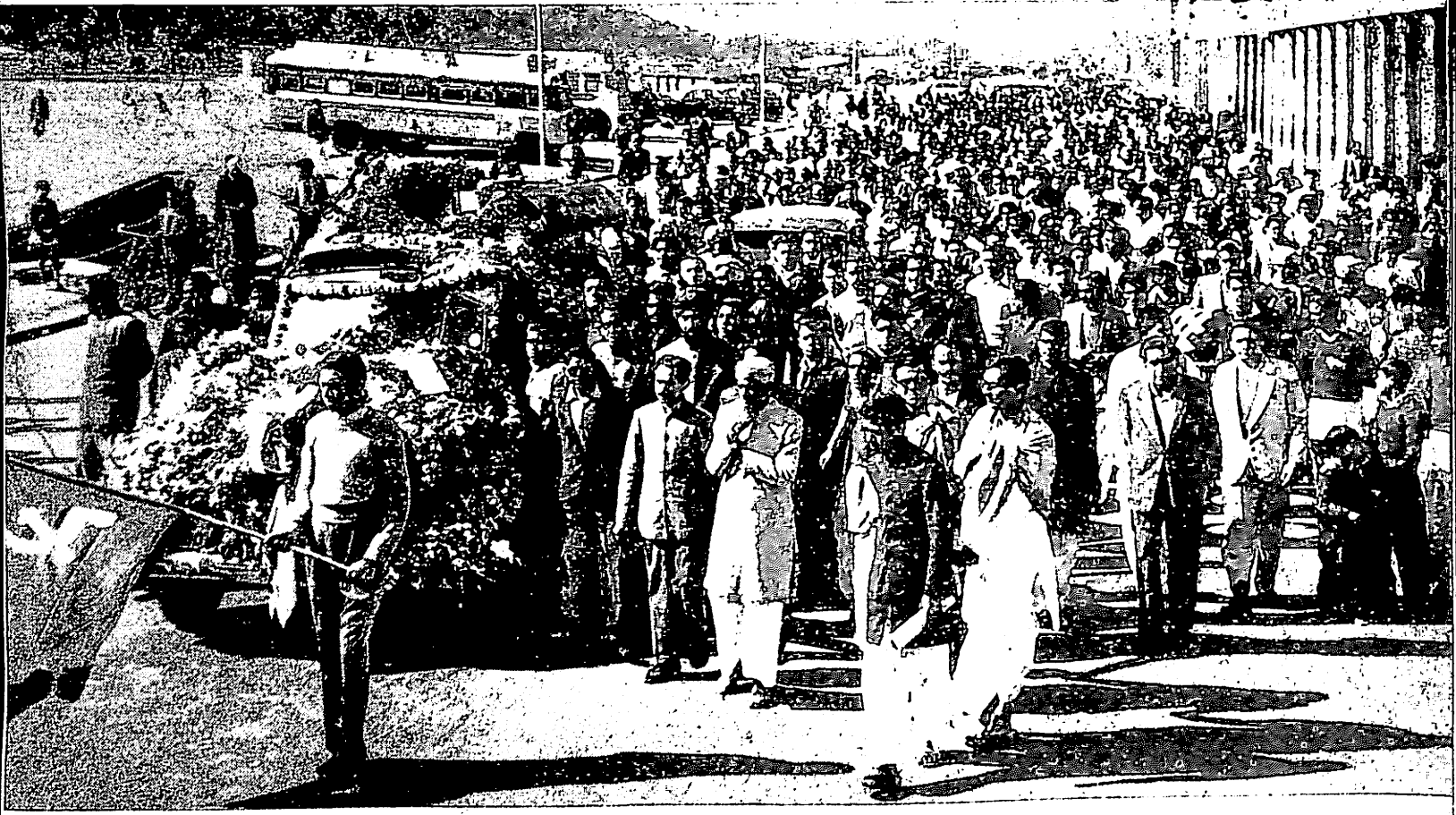
In its message to the people, the National Council of the Communist Party of India said

'The Communist Party has suffered an irreparable loss

"Inspired by the memory of his great life, we must unite still more closely and work with still greater fervour for the victory of the people's cause, communism, for which Ajoy Ghosh made the supreme sacrifice

"We dip the Red Flag in respect to our departed leader "

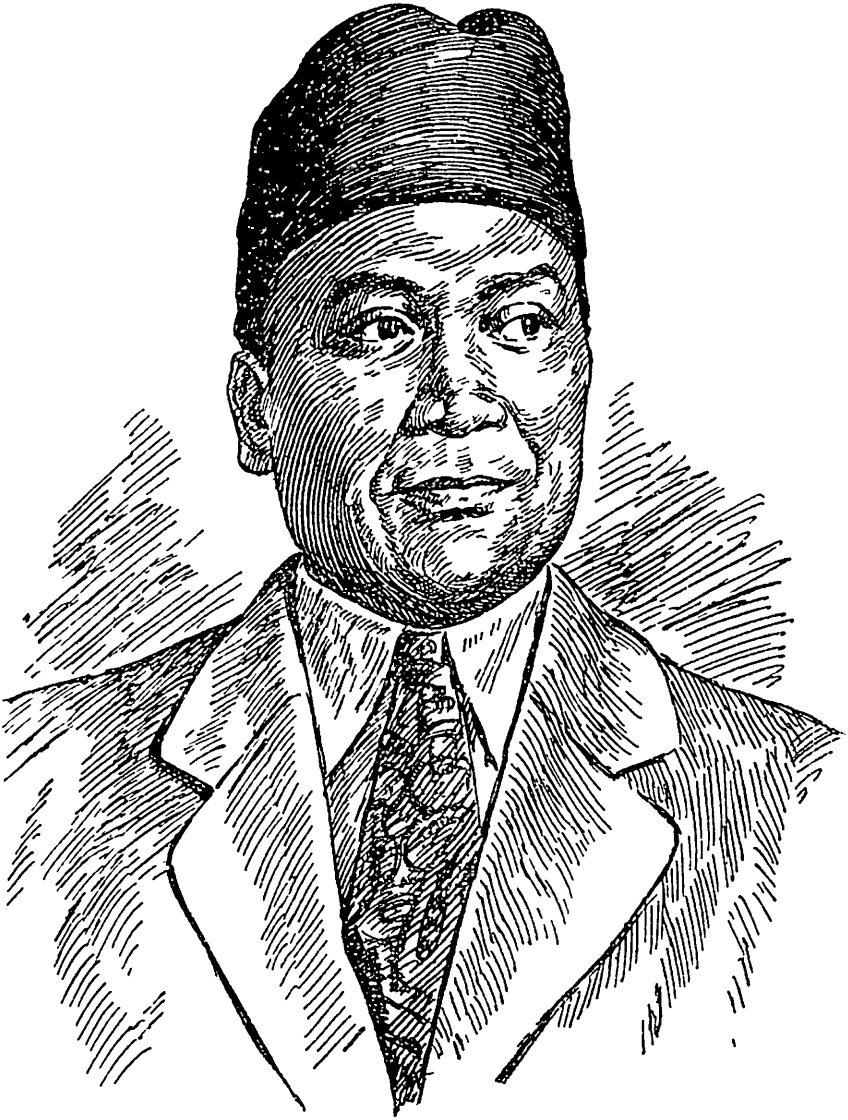
Communists all over the world shared the profound grief of the Communists and working people of India The Central Committee of the C P S U said in its message of condolences to them 'Comrade Ghosh gave his strength to the consolidation of the Communist Party of India organisationally and ideologically on the inviolable basis of Marxism Leninism Under his leadership as the General Secretary of the Nation-



Ghosh's funeral

al Council, the Communist Party has achieved great successes and become an influential political force in the country and a militant vanguard of the working class and all progressive forces of India "

The outstanding role of the man who for decades marched in the front line of the Party s militant ranks is now more apparent than ever to the Communists of India and the workers of all lands



Manovar Musso

Manovar Musso

agu is a small village like many other villages in eastern Java There, on August 12, 1898, a son was born to Datar and Kasanah, and they gave him the name of Manovar

The parents worked from dawn to dark, for there were seven children in the family Like most rice growers in Lagu, Datar tilled his field standing knee high in water for hours on end The batik garments Kasanah sewed all day long were occasionally sold or exchanged That was how practically everybody in Lagu scraped along

Manovar Musso was sent to the village school to study, which was rather extraordinary for the little son of poor Indonesian parents But the lad with the proud and intelligent face was unusually gifted, it seemed After finishing the village school, Manovar went to town to enroll in a teachers' seminary

There, as throughout Indonesia, teaching was conducted in Dutch The teachers' main instruments of persuasion were the ruler and the locked room—who cared about the feelings of Indonesians?! Manovar rebelled against the insults

The students' strike demanding the dismissal of the most objectionable teachers at the seminary was led by 19 year old Manovar Musso For two weeks the seminary rebelled and the town was in an uproar

Rather than see the strike spread the administrators of the seminary yielded to the students' demands and dismissed the two most brutal teachers

Musso had so obviously played a leading role in the strike that the administrators felt something had to be done about him He was expelled from the seminary But what a rumpus that caused! The students insisted on the reinstatement of their leader and organiser The respect and trust his fellows showed Musso was amazing Nothing could turn them from their purpose and the frightened administration had to give in again!

In 1918, Musso graduated from the seminary and left for Batavia as Djakarta was then known He had to rely on the kindness of friends for quite some time before he could find work And when at last he did secure a position in the post office, his active role in the trade union movement marked him out as a menace to the Dutch, and he was fired

The year 1920 saw Musso a member of the Sarekat Islam (Islam Alliance), a popular bourgeois nationalistic organisation of the period, which did not openly advocate opposition to Dutch rule but demanded broad democratic rights for the Indonesian people, particularly in the cultural domain

A Left wing group appeared in this organisation shortly after Musso joined it It was ideologically close to the Communist Party of Indonesia, which had just been established that year Its demand for Indonesian independence and its general anti-colonial stand made it the butt of repression and persecution by the Dutch The Left wing leaders were arrested, and Musso was sentenced to hard labour

The year 1923 found Musso living on Java He now joined the Communist Party of Indonesia Although he was only 25

years of age, he was a seasoned fighter for the betterment of his people s lot, a professional revolutionary who enjoyed their respect and love The Party could hardly have struck on a more suitable person for work in the trade unions With his experience and his position as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia, he was excellently fitted to transform the trade unions into militant revolu tionary organisations of the working class

In 1924, as one of the leaders of the All Indonesian Trade Union Federation, Musso was chosen by the Central Commit tee to go to Surabaya, large port and industrial town in eastern Java

Throughout 1925, Musso worked to good effect in Surabaya, and the result was the metal workers' and dockers' strike Sweeping the town and the port, it became a general strike But troops were sent to Surabaya, the strike was crushed, and Musso had to go into hiding Still, his work in Surabaya forms a glowing chapter in the history of the Indonesian working class movement It helped to forge the admirable traditions of its national liberation movement Twenty years passed, and it was here once more, on November 10, 1945, that the flames of the Indonesian people's armed struggle against the colonialists flared up

In 1926, the Communist Party of Indonesia held a secret meeting which decided to establish direct contacts with the Executive of the Communist International Musso and Alimin were delegated to go to Moscow The journey lasted many weeks and took them through Malaya, Thailand and China, through a thousand and one dangers and traps

In July, the delegates reported to the Comintern on the situation in Indonesia They described the tension, the strikes, the continuing unrest On their way back from the Soviet Union reports of the November uprising on Java overtook them in Shanghai The remainder of their journey to Indone sia was beset with great danger and personal risk Canton and Bangkok lay behind them, they arrived in Singapore to find

that martial law had been invoked by the Dutch The regime in the border areas was stringent and spies stalked them everywhere

To elude the police Musso and Alimin went to work on a plantation But they were given away by Agam Putih, a paid informer in the employ of the British colonial police, and were clapped into prison

Their interrogation got the authorities nowhere, and as there was no evidence against them, Musso and Alimin were released and sent out of Singapore in April 1927 But in Canton they were again detained by the police Meanwhile, blood was being shed in Indonesia and thousands of rebels, the best sons of the people, were being killed by punitive detachments or deprived of their liberty Communists were subjected to incredible tortures in prison Hundreds of patriots were packed away to the swamplands of West Irian The General Secretary of the Communist Party of Indonesia Aliarham died in a camp in the Degul marshes

During the executions at Tjiamis the condemned died with the words 'Long live communism" on their lips The Dutch made it known that if Musso returned to Indonesia, he would be tried without delay by a military tribunal, which meant certain death But Musso was determined to return to his homeland Only the decision of the Comintern to recall him to Moscow where he was needed for work in the Red Trade Union International (Profintern) could turn him from his purpose

In 1928, Musso was elected a member of the Profintern He immersed himself in the work of its Executive, and simultaneously studied the history of the national liberation movement and social struggle in Indonesia He continued that study for many years His works present a profound Marxist analysis of the situation in Indonesia and the revolutionary movement of its proletarian and peasant masses He clarified the goals of the national liberation struggle of the Indonesian people, and exposed the policy of Dutch imperialism and its

Musso at work

servitors, the Right Social Democrats of Holland and the Indonesian reaction

Analysing the lessons of the popular uprising of 1926 1927 in his article "The Revolutionary Trade Union Move ment in Indonesia", Musso pointed out "All classes of the Indonesian population are now united in a revolutionary bloc, all are pitted against a common enemy, Dutch imperialism The policy of brutal repression implemented by the Dutch imperialists in Indonesia has antagonised all classes of the population against them Even some of the reactionary movements of local origin which once backed the imperialists have now turned against them The revolutionary

workers have not been intimidated by repression and are mustering their forces to resume the struggle They are pushing on despite their numerous losses, they will not stop until they have reached their goal—the overthrow of Dutch imperialism "

The popular uprising of 1926 1927 shook the foundations of Dutch rule in Indonesia The colonialists realised that club rule and the wholesale persecution of Indonesian patriots could only shorten their stay in that rich country And so while they discriminated against, hounded and exiled the most revolutionary section of the Indonesian nation—the workers and peasants, and their vanguard, the Communist Party—they made it a point to bribe the leaders of bourgeois nationalistic parties and organisations among other ways by giving them minor posts in the colonial administration, or setting up a semblance of local self government" and letting them rule some little roost In 'New Stage of Dutch Government Policy in Indonesia", "Work of the Profintern's Supporters in Indonesia", How the Breath of Amsterdam Reaches Indonesia ' and other articles, Musso exposed the insidious policy of the Dutch colonialists and their servitors inside the country, and showed that their aim was to split the anti colonial struggle of the Indonesian people and prevent a united national liberation front In the thirties, the Dutch colonialists turned their attention to training agents drawn from the Indonesian youth, thinking with the latter's help to consolidate their political positions in the colony They made it easier for young Indonesians to enter the educational establishments of Amsterdam and the Hague The pro Dutch propaganda to which these young Indonesians were exposed harboured a great potential threat to the national liberation movement For that reason the C P I leadership asked Musso to devote himself seriously to the organisations of the young Indonesians studying in Holland That became all the more imperative when a group of reactionaries led by Hatta wormed their way into the leadership of the Perhimpunan Indo

nesia As a result of Musso's painstaking efforts, the C P I was able to win over most of the membership and persuade it to expell Hatta and his clique The Communists formed underground student circles in the Hague and Amsterdam to study Marxist philosophy and political economy and make known the truth about the achievements of the USSR With the cooperation of the most progressive students, they brought out a legal students printed newspaper The C P I also conducted effective work among the Indonesian seamen serving on merchant vessels that called at Dutch ports and among the Dutch dock workers The newspaper for seamen and factory workers started by the Indonesian Communist Party with the assistance of the Communists of Holland performed a highly important internationalist duty, strengthen ing the solidarity and fraternity of the working people of the two countries

Within Indonesia, the Communist Party gradually re-established the organisations of the workers and peasants that had been suppressed by the Dutch colonialists during the popular uprising The events of 1926 and 1927 had con vinced the Communist Party of the necessity of greatly activ ating its work with the masses, of popularising its slogans and making its aims more widely known, of drawing not only the whole Indonesian proletariat but also the peasants and other native patriotic forces over to its side In his speech at the 11th plenary meeting of the Comintern Executive in 1931, Musso listed the immediate tasks of the Communist Party of Indonesia as follows

"Restoration of the disrupted Party organisations, which requires that the Party shall find new methods of work suited to the illegal conditions forced on it by the Dutch imperial ists' police regime Transfer of the centre of gravity of all Party activity to the places where the urban and rural prole tariat are concentrated, that is, the factories and plantations Rehabilitation of the disbanded trade unions and struggle for their legalisation Special attention to the pressing de

mands of the peasantry, the development and consolidation of the peasants' organisations Work in all the mass national organisations, in which the Communist Party must form factions and unite the national revolutionary elements around them Determined struggle against the Dutch Social Democrats who are trying with government support to gain a hold on the native proletariat Drawing of the numerous Chinese workers into the class and national revolutionary struggle and establishment of ties with the communist movements of China and India "

Despite the terror instituted by the Dutch colonialists, the workers' and national liberation movements of Indonesia picked up strength The world economic crisis of 1929, which affected Indonesia, did much to activate the democratic movement in the country A wave of spontaneous strikes and peasant unrest passed over Indonesia The discontent with the colonial authorities' policy of repression was shared by a great many Indonesian white collar workers Indonesian working class action coincided with the class battles of the Dutch proletariat Events occurred at the end of 1932 which had a great revolutionising effect on the national liberation movement in Indonesia The Dutch seamen in Surabaya mutinied in a body with serious repercussions among the soldiers of the colonial army who were rankled by the cut in their cash pay and the brutal treatment meted out to them by their commanders Things reached a boiling point with the mutiny on the Dutch armoured cruiser *De Zeven Provinçien* Although the mutiny and disturbances in the colonial army were quelled, these events exposed the rottenness of the Dutch colonial regime in the eyes of the Indonesian people and helped to strengthen the Left wing of the reformist trade unions and nationalistic organisations of the country The strike movement in the factories and on the plantations gained momentum A huge railwaymen's strike broke out on Java in August 1933 But the leaders of the nationalistic trade unions and organisations, frightened by the prospect of renewed

Musso with Suripno, an Indonesian diplomat

working-class action, made every effort to direct the developing strike movement into passive channels. New paths and forms of struggle had to be found, and the reason for certain failures elucidated.

That was done by Musso. "The weakness of the movement of the masses in Indonesia," he said in 1931, "is to be explained by the almost total absence of a revolutionary organisation capable of assuming leadership of the workers' and peasants' struggle against the intensified attacks of international capital. For that reason, the foundation of Red trade unions is of particular importance at the present

time Up and down the country the revolutionary workers must set about forming factory and plantation committees elected by the toiling masses from among their most progressive and militant representatives Only by organising Red trade unions that rest on strong groups in the factories by a stubborn fight to win over the masses inside the reactionary trade unions can we hope to expose and isolate the reformist leaders of all hues "

After a careful survey of the concrete situation, Musso concluded that legal methods of work should be more actively tapped

"It is essential to make skilful use of all kinds of legal public organisations and fight for the open existence of the trade unions One of the main demands of the strike movement should be recognition of the revolutionary trade unions and factory committees The paramount task of every class conscious worker is active participation in the workers' defence units set up to fight scabs and protect demonstrations and other working class actions "

The growth of strike action by the Indonesian proletariat, the spread of peasant unrest, and the appearance of revolutionary trade unions all made it easier and at the same time increasingly imperative to invigorate the work of the Communist Party, which was still functioning illegally and often in isolated underground groups

The absence of a strong and united central leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia harboured the possibility of its turning into a narrow sectarian group divorced from life and contemporary developments

Musso accordingly decided to go to Indonesia and head the Party at that difficult juncture, and by his practical work demonstrate the correctness of his theoretical premises and recommendations Many hazards attended such a venture, the risk was indeed tremendous! He would have to live and work and rub shoulders with people in surroundings where his life was in constant danger

It was in 1935, not long after his arrival in Indonesia, that Musso succeeded in assembling the leaders of the isolated Party branches scattered over the country and forming a central Party leadership He attached tremendous importance to the publication of Party periodicals, and a highly con spiratorial printing plant was established at his sugges tion

These steps enabled the Communist Party of Indonesia to re cover quickly from the blows it had suffered at the hands of the Dutch colonialists during the 1926 1927 uprising, and to work out a political line for the future The report of the 5th Congress of the C P I stressed that after 1935, the year of Musso's illegal return to his homeland, the Communist Party followed the sole correct policy of a united front with the na tional bourgeoisie against the growing threat of fascism This was largely owing to Musso s guidance

After almost a year in Indonesia Musso went abroad again It had been a year of self sacrificing work attended by daily risks Indeed, the courage and fearlessness of the elu sive Musso have become legend

The summer of 1938 found Musso in Belgium, where he maintained close contacts with the Communist Party of In donesia through Belgian and Dutch Communists

He worked hard, as usual, writing articles about Indone sia for Party periodicals, and starting the compilation of a popular textbook on historical materialism

As autumn approached, and the weather turned cold and damp in Brussels, Musso's chronic asthma began to trouble him "The weather here is damp and foggy," he wrote his family in November 1938 "This is very bad for my health The continual rain has kept me indoors these three days My only comfort is hard work "

Musso's stay in Belgium was attended by great risks too The frequent visits of the police to the boarding house where he lived kept him in a state of tension all the time In the au tumn of 1939 his whereabouts were discovered, and he was

arrested But Musso was highly skilled in conspiratorial techniques, and the Belgian court could not muster any direct evidence against him Although he was sentenced to only five weeks' imprisonment, his term dragged out to a month and then two and three months Musso was still in prison when the events of the Second World War started by nazi Germany got fully under way Early in 1940, the fascist army invaded Belgium In March a large group of prisoners, among them Musso, was loaded into freight cars and sent to a concentration camp in France In the spring of 1941, Musso managed to escape from the camp against great odds, and made his way to the Soviet Union

The perfidious invasion of the Soviet Union by nazi Germany postponed Musso s return to his own country for several more years

Together with all the Soviet people, who had become his dear friends in the years of his exile from his homeland, Musso firmly believed in the victory of the socialist system and inevitable defeat of Hitlerism 'Don't worry, everything is going fine We are sure to win," he wrote his daughter Sunar at the end of July 1941

The Soviet Union s victory over nazi Germany and decisive contribution to the utter defeat of Japanese militarism opened the road to freedom for the colonial peoples The Indonesian people took up arms and won their independence In the vanguard of their fight for independence marched the Communists united in a strong Party schooled by Musso and his colleagues

Complicated tasks faced the Communist Party under the new conditions The Communists realised that the proclamation of the country's independence did not consummate the revolution, but merely ushered in a new and more difficult phase First of all the Party had to be organisationally consolidated, a task rendered difficult by the lack of experienced Party cadres Its influence among the workers', peasants', youth and women's organisations had to be strengthened

All the patriotic forces of the nation had to be united for the task of completing the national liberation of the country from colonial oppression. The Communist Party had to watch the policy of the bourgeois parties represented in the government coalition, which were wavering in their stand against the imperialist powers.

Musso in 1941

The Dutch imperialists and their backers, the American and British governments, on being faced with the determination of the Indonesian people to defend their rights in armed struggle and their own inability to forcibly prevent the liberation of the country, began to seek other methods of retaining their domination. They chose the hackneyed method of "peaceful negotiation"—under threat of the use of arms!

The first republican government composed of representatives of the bourgeois parties headed by the Right-wing Socialist Sjahrir, known to be an agent of the Dutch and British imperialists, gave in to the colonialists' claims. Sjahrir headed the Indonesian delegation during the negotiations with the Dutch. Hiding behind democratic slogans and talk of "saving the republic", he surrendered one position after another to the colonialists. Imperialist agents aided by the mercenary leaders of the bourgeois nationalistic parties created an atmosphere of intrigue and provocation around the negotiations so as the better to split the ranks of the revolutionary forces and isolate the Communist Party from the masses.

The interminable negotiations ended on November 15, 1946, in the initialling of what has gone down in history as the Lingadjati Treaty, which left the Dutch colonialists much where they had been before Recognition of the Republic was limited to the de facto government existing on Java, Madura and Sumatra The regions still occupied by the imperialists were declared subject to "gradual" liberation Instead of a single centralised country, the Treaty imposed the status of federation on the land in which the powers of statehood were to be granted to the puppet republics created by the imperialists on Kalimantan and the eastern part of the Indonesian Archipelago It also stipulated that the future United States of Indonesia and Kingdom of Holland were to form a Netherlands Indonesian alliance under the aegis of the Dutch crown

For the Dutch imperialists and the American and British monopolies behind them, the Lingadjati Treaty was nothing but a manoeuvre designed to pave the way for the defeat of the national liberation movement and abolition of the Republic

Holland lost no time in setting up puppet governments on the occupied territory of Java, Madura and Sumatra More contingents of troops armed with American weapons kept pouring into Indonesia In the midst of their ambitious military and political preparations, the Dutch imperialists sought a pretext to start open hostilities against the Indonesian Republic They kept instigating new conflicts and difficulties and presenting ultimatums to the Republic

The readiness of Sutan Sjahrir's government to yield to their demands aroused general indignation When Sjahrir indicated that it meant to comply with the insolent Dutch plan of setting up military patrols on the territory of the Republic, the result was a countrywide demand for the resignation of his cabinet

Upon the fall of the Sjahrir cabinet, a coalition government headed by the Communists was formed with Amir Sja

rifuddin, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the C P I as Prime Minister The new government set out to institute democratic reforms in the country, despite the continuation of hostilities and blockade by the Dutch imperialists

The Dutch army met with fierce resistance from the Indonesian people Although it succeeded in occupying the large cities, it could not wrest the rural and mountain districts from the republican army

Holland's extension of her war against the Indonesian Republic was indignantly condemned by world public opinion The imperialists had to agree to further talks with the Indonesian Republic

The negotiations conducted between the Indonesian and Dutch sides at the end of 1947 and beginning of 1948 on the *Renville*, an American warship, were attended by blackmail, intimidation and backstage conspiring with the reactionary leaders of the Indonesian bourgeois parties

They resulted in the Renville Agreement which again imposed unfavourable conditions on the Indonesian Republic The size of its territory was reduced A number of districts under its de facto rule were to be handed over to the Dutch upon the withdrawal of the 35,000 strong republican troops from them

Even before the conclusion of this agreement, the imperialists had exercised all kinds of pressure on the Indonesian government to push their humiliating terms down its throat

Now, with its conclusion, they wielded a convenient device for discrediting and trying to oust the Sjarifuddin cabinet to which they objected Acting on orders from U S agents, the reactionary Masjumi Party which entered into the government coalition formed an opposition group inside the cabinet and refused to give it further cooperation As a result, the Communist led cabinet fell

It was replaced by the extremist Right wing government

of Hatta, which launched such reactionary measures as anti-labour laws, the attempted restoration of the feudal privileges of the big landowners and restriction of the rights of the personnel of the armed services In the sphere of foreign policy, it took a stand in favour of capitulation to the Dutch colonialists

A very real danger arose of its sacrificing all the gains the August 1945 revolution and reinstating the colonial regime so hateful to the people

As was to be expected, its policies aroused widespread dis ontent Popular resistance to the new government's reac ionary policies mounted

The Communist Party was still weakened by its fragmentation into legal and illegal organisations with all the inevitable consequences

On top of that, Right wing socialist anarchist and liquidationist elements had found their way into the Party and were doing subversive work from within

Drastic steps had to be taken at once to strengthen the vanguard of the Indonesian working class, alter the strategy of the C P I to suit the contemporary stage of the national liberation revolution, and chart a clear political course

A plane neared Indonesia Behind it lay the emerald jungles of Malaya, down below, glimpses of the sails of fishing boats flickered in a blue mist

This was an ordinary flight for all the passengers on the plane save one who had not seen his homeland for thirteen years Musso was back in Indonesia! The day was August 11, 1948 On August 13 and 14, the Political Bureau of the C P I Central Committee met to hear a report by Musso and adopt a draft resolution for the coming Congress of the Party The draft carefully analysed the Party's mistakes and proposed a new tactical line to enhance its leading role in the national liberation movement, it outlined ways and means of uniting all the parties ideologically or organisationally associated with the C P I

The Conference of August 1948 was a turning point in the history of the Communist Party of Indonesia It subjected the Party s activities to all round criticism

The resolution drawn up by Musso and endorsed by the Conference was entitled The New Road of the Indonesian Republic It pointed out that the existence of three working-class parties in the country—the illegal Communist Party, the Indonesian Party of Labour and the Indonesian Socialist Party—made for confusion in the working class movement and weakened the influence of the Communist Party among the masses The resolution condemned sectarian contempt for work with the proletariat and peasantry

The Conference stressed the importance of radically improving the Party's work in the trade unions and legal public organisations of the working people For the first time in the history of the C P I , the Conference strongly condemned the Right and Left deviations and called for a determined fight against the exponents of those deviations inside the Party

The New Road of the Indonesian Republic outlined a precise programme of action for the Communist Party based on a realistic evaluation of the internal and international position of the country It formulated the basic premises of a united national front whose formation would serve as a weapon of the national revolution against imperialism It defined the role of the Communist Party in the activities of the united national front

After the August Conference, the Communist Party launched a big campaign to popularise the "New Road" resolu tion

The process of the merger of the democratic parties and mass organisations with the Communist Party of Indonesia got under way at the end of August 1948 The Party of La bour, the Socialist Party headed by Sjarifuddin, and the Organisation of Socialist Youth made known their intention of merging with the Communist Party

Early in September 1948, a special Party Conference was held which settled the major problems of the reorganisation of the work of the C P I The Conference elected a Political Bureau Manovar Musso was unanimously elected the General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee

After the Conference, Musso and other leaders of the Com munist Party left for eastern Java On September 8, General Secretary of the C P I Musso addressed a large public meeting in Madiun He lashed out sharply at the Hatta government for its policy of compromise with the Dutch imperialists "We do not recognise either the terms of the cease fire or the Renville Treaty Agreement," he said "Our aim is to take the guns out of the hands of the Dutch '

On September 9, 1948, the C P I made official united front representations to the leadership of the Masjumi and National parties, the offer was rejected

Frightened by the growing prestige of the C P I and the popular support it had gained, the Hatta government started a chain of measures aimed at undermining the influence of the C P I on social and political life

One of the steps against the C P I taken by the Hatta government in the summer of 1948 was to purge the armed forces of progressive elements Under the pretext of putting through a rationalisation programme' in the form of a cut in personnel the government expelled supporters of the Com munist Party and other progressive organisations from the army Army units in which the influence of the Communist Party was particularly marked were disbanded This govern- ment policy incurred opposition from a number of army units

In September, at Solo, agents of the Hatta government kidnapped five officers of the 4th division who had come out actively against the 'rationalisation programme Incensed by this deed the men of the 4th division presented the com mand of the battalion responsible for the abduction with an ultimatum threatening armed action September 13 saw the

outbreak of fighting between the units of the 4th division and the battalion

The government, charging the units of the 4th division with seditious conduct, sent up troops loyal to it to deal with them That was merely the prelude to a ramified programme of provocation The Solo incident agitated the population of the nearby town of Madiun, where the situation grew extremely tense Shortly before that, reactionary armymen had killed a worker, and his funeral had turned into a mass demonstration Many spokesmen of the political parties and public organisations registered vigorous protests When news of the fighting at Solo reached Madiun, the army units stationed there split into two sides, for and against the 4th division, and on September 18th they too came to blows The government forces despatched to the district were disarmed in no time

The clashes between these army units led to a state of anarchy throughout the whole Madiun area The head of the district, the Residing Officer of Madiun, was away at Djokjakarta at the time, and the mayor of the town was ill Under the circumstances, the parties entering into the People's Democratic Front and mass organisations affiliated with it demanded that the deputy mayor of the town, Supardi, a Communist Party member, temporarily fill the office of Residing Officer The Commander of the Madiun military subdistrict as well as the mayor of the town complied

The leaders of the People's Democratic Front then asked Musso, in view of his popularity and prestige, to go to Madiun and look into the matter Musso arrived there late in the evening of September 18, and after sizing up the situation recommended that the government be apprised at once of how matters stood A messenger was despatched to the capital with a report Telegrams on the state of affairs in Madiun were likewise sent to the president, the Premier, and the Ministers of Defence and Home Affairs

The report was not accepted by the Hatta government, which interpreted the temporary designation of a Communist to head the Madiun district as an attempt by the Communist Party to seize state power and "overthrow the government of the Indonesian Republic" On September 19, the Hatta government launched an undisguised civil war against the progressive forces led by the Communist Party The extent of that long planned reactionary conspiracy against the Communist Party can be judged by the speed with which the outbreak of the "Madiun events ' sparked off the wholesale arrests of Communists all over the country All 180 delegates to the Central Trade Union Conference which met to discuss the August decision of the C P I Political Bureau were jailed That same day the members of the Political Bureau of the C P I Central Committee were arrested at Djokjakarta

Musso asked the Hatta government to negotiate, but it refused The Communist Party had to start armed resistance entirely on its own, events had taken such a spontaneous turn that the wide masses and revolutionary forces in other parts of the country could not give the Communist Party organised help

On October 31, 1948, the news agencies broke the sad news of the death of Manovar Musso, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Indonesia Musso had gone from detachment to detachment organising resistance to the reactionary gangs and, by his fearless and dauntless example, sowing confidence in the hearts of his compatriots While on that errand, he and his two lieutenants were surrounded by a unit of Hatta soldiers

"Surrender, Musso!" they shouted and fired They knew Musso would never surrender

Several bullets struck him He raised his hand in the gesture familiar to the workers of Djokjakarta and dockers of Surabaya, the metallists of Moscow and students of Brussels Turning to the soldiers who had fired at him and mustering

all his spiritual power he cried "Long live communism!" Those were his last words

Musso is a model for every Communist and patriot to follow', said Aidit 'Like him every Communist and true son of the people should dedicate his life to the defence of the nation, of our just cause They are lucky who have the spirit and courage of Comrade Musso Such men will live forever in the hearts of the Indonesian people, to such men they can entrust their fate "

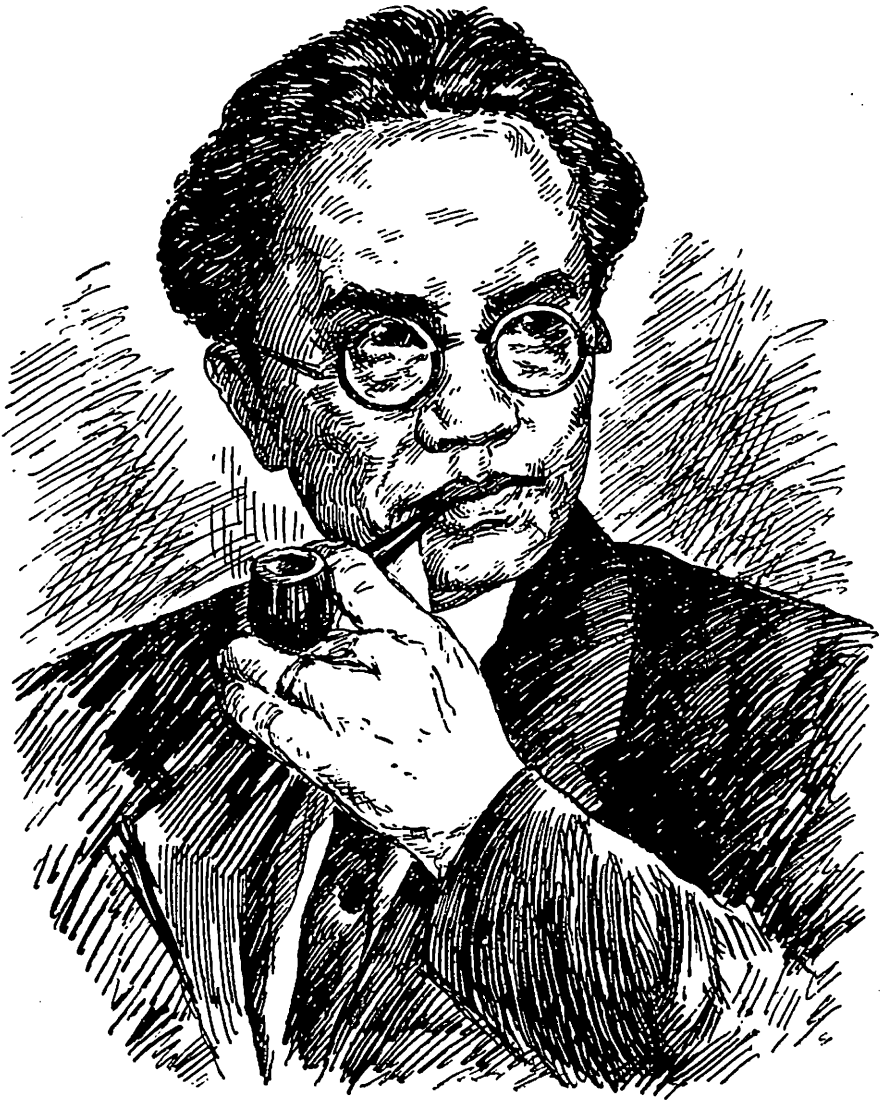
The memory of Indonesia's great citizen lives not in the hearts of the Indonesian people alone It is cherished by the Soviet people among whom Musso spent many years of his life He helped lay the foundation of the friendship of the two great nations His aspirations were his own people s aspirations, at the same time he shared the thoughts and feelings of the Soviet people engaged in the construction of socialist society A consistent internationalist and true friend of the first socialist country, Musso always stressed that the achievements of the Soviet Union were the achievements of all the working people of the world, including the Indo nesian people

In his article "The October Revolution and the Indonesian Revolutionary Movement", written on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, he stressed the significance of the Russian Re volution for the destinies of the Indonesian people

The October Revolution," he said stirred all classes and sections of Indonesian society and drew the revoluti onary-minded elements into our Communist Party In its short legal existence, the Communist Party of Indonesia un derwent severe and turbulent experiences The Indonesian masses have drawn inspiration from the example of the Russian workers and peasants who have become the masters of their own land, undaunted by privation and sacrifice they are staunchly fighting against their exploiters No vember 7 is the greatest date in the history of the world pro

letariat, and therefore the working class of Indonesia regards that day as its greatest holiday "

Not far from the place where Musso's childhood years were spent is his modest grave, one of many There is no monument to mark his resting place The eternal monument to Musso is his work for the future of his homeland and his people For that he lived, for that he laid down his life!



Amir Sjarifuddin

Amir Sjarifuddin

Born 1907
Birthplace—the Island of Sumatra
Education—university graduate

Thus opened the dossier locked away in the safes of every branch of the Dutch colonial gendarmerie on Java, Sumatra or any other Indonesian island in the thirties

In the mid twenties, the colonial authorities decided they could wield more influence at least over the youth if they extended opportunities for Indonesians to study in the colleges of the Hague and Amsterdam But the greater and better numbers of these young Indonesians continued to see the Dutch authorities for what they really were—colonialists and oppressors

On his return from the Netherlands in 1928, Sjarifuddin devoted himself actively to the country s social movements and struggle for national liberation His work in various patriotic organisations proved him a confirmed and irreconcilable foe of Dutch colonialism His courage, energy and dedication to the liberation cause gained bung (brother)

Amir, as the people called Sjarifuddin, universal respect and love

The natural place for one so committed to the cause of national independence and the people's happiness was in the ranks of the Communist Party

This was the period of the Party s consolidation of the growth of its influence on the people Not even its illegal status could check that process

In view of Sjarifuddin's popularity and prestige, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia found it best to use him for legal work Amir was active in the foundation and direction of the Gerindo, an Indonesian national movement which favoured the amalgamation of all the main national organisations in a united front against colonialism and for independence In May 1939, eight political parties and organisations formed the GAPI an Indonesian political association whose plat form included self determination, national unity based on political, economic and social democracy, and a democra tically elected Indonesian parliament Amir Sjarifuddin became one of the leaders of the association

In December 1939, the GAPI called a congress of the In donesian people attended by representatives of 90 different national parties and organisations The congress did much to unite the forces of the nation around the slogan of the im mediate granting of democratic rights to the people Amir Sjarifuddin played an eminent part in the sessions of the congress and the realisation of its decisions The congress came out for making the Indonesian language the common language of the nation, and the text and music of the song Great Indonesia" its national anthem It stated that the Second World War just unleashed also constituted a threat to Indonesia, and urged the Dutch and Indonesian peoples to join hands in resisting Japanese militarism

Arguing that the main problem of the time was the fight against German fascism (the threat to the Netherlands) and

Japanese militarism (the threat to Indonesia), the political parties and organisations of Indonesia demanded that the Dutch grant their country self government within the frame work of the Dutch constitution

But even when the Netherlands capitulated and Indo nesian territory was occupied, the Dutch authorities refused to grant the Indonesian people any modicum of political independence

That position of the Dutch colonialists was doubtlessly one reason why a number of national leaders fell for the mythical claim of the Japanese to being the "emancipators" of the Indonesian people

The Communist Party of Indonesia alone exposed the hypocritical propaganda of the Japanese concerning their imaginary 'liberation mission" in Indonesia, and alerted the nation to resistance against the invaders At first the Japanese curried favour with the leaders of the Indonesian national movement by spreading the chauvinistic slogan of "Asia for the Asians", their idea was to exploit the prestige of these leaders to consolidate their own posi tions and push their expansion in South East Asia Even prior to the invasion of Indonesia, Japanese agents had repeatedly tried to bribe and enlist Amir Sjarifuddin and capitalise on the authority he wielded with the leaders of the national movement Sjarifuddin's reply to their contemptible propo sals was to expose the lying Japanese propaganda day in and day out, and intensify resistance to the Japanese invasion, giving all his energies to that work

When the Japanese army occupied Indonesia, the Japa nese intelligence service started a search for Sjarifuddin Where was he?

Even people who knew him well failed to recognise him in the disguise of a street vendor which he adopted to evade the police Thus disguised he continued to organise resistance to the invaders, travelling up and down the country on instructions from the C P I , and risking

his life every hour of the day He was too dangerous a figure for the hunt to be abandoned however and if he was not caught sooner it was because he was closely guarded by his people But in 1943 Japanese sleuths fell on his tracks

For ten whole days they subjected him to the most sadistic tortures He was hung by the feet, with his hands tied behind his back His face was covered with a handkerchief and a constant stream of water poured on it until he choked and lost consciousness The Japanese sadists cynically called that method of torture "the water cure ' When they saw that they could not make him talk, the Japanese sentenced him to death The news leaked out, and the wave of indig nation that greeted it was so overwhelming that the hang men took fright and commuted the sentence to life impri sonment

For two years the Japanese moved Amir from prison to prison in order to keep his countrymen from arranging his escape And even after independence was proclaimed, six weeks passed before Amir saw the light of day again On August 31, 1945, the first independent Indonesian govern ment was formed with President Sukarno at its head Amir Sjarifuddin was appointed to the high post of Minister of Information in Sukarno s Cabinet From then on, and until the beginning of 1948, he entered into all the cabinets of the Indonesian government, and held the posts of Defence Mi nister and later Premier In 1945, he was one of the leaders of the newly organised Socialist Party of Indonesia, which was soon to emerge as an extremely influential political party in the country

This period represents the culmination of the national liberation revolution The day after independence was de clared, on August 18 1945, the young Republic adopted its first constitution and elected Sukarno its first president On August 29, the Central National Council of Indonesia (KNIP) began its work It was later reorganised as the Pro

visional Parliament of the Republic rallying various poli tical parties and organisations around it At the initiative of the Communist Party and the Central National Council, a strong bloc of Left parties and organisations was formed, including the Communist Socialist and Labour parties and many other democratic organisations Amir Sjarifuddin was one of the leaders of this bloc, which gathered around it all the progressive and national patriotic forces of the Republic, and espoused the goal of complete national emancipation and the expulsion of the colonialists

Having obstructed the Indonesian people's defence effort, the Dutch authorities now left no stone unturned to supplant the Japanese They could not keep their richest colony from proclaiming independence, but that by no means signified that they were reconciled to the prospect of losing their economic positions there

On September 29 1945 the first contingents of an Anglo Dutch invading force were landed on Java As usual, the British colonialists had an excuse for the inter vention Attlee s Labour government announced that Brit ain had sent in the troops to salvage the weapons of the de feated Japanese army As it happened, those weapons were already in the possession of Indonesia s patriots, who had salvaged" them from the Japanese invaders in bloody bat tles On November 9, 1945, Commander Menserg of the British force in Surabaya demanded that the Indonesians surrender their weapons That they flatly refused to do It was at this grave juncture in the life of the young Republic, when mor tal danger hung over it, that Amir Sjarifuddin was appointed Defence minister and put in charge of the armed forces of the Indonesian people

The strengthening of the fighting capacity of the Indone sian army went hand in hand with the work of uniting all the patriotic forces of the nation around the central government and scotching the separatist movements which had been en couraged by the imperialists in order to weaken and paralyse

the Republic When in the spring of 1946 a movement arose on Sumatra for the separation of the island from Java, Amir Sjarifuddin left for Sumatra at the head of a group of political leaders The purpose of their mission was to patiently and persistently explain to the Sumatra separatists how dangerous their position was and how their slogans played into the hands of the imperialists, who wanted nothing better than to split and divide the national forces of the country and disrupt its unity

Wherever the Sjarifuddin group went—to Medan, Bukittingi or other cities —its mission was a success

The attempts of the Dutch colonialists to retrieve their lost political positions in Indonesia by force met with the determined resistance of all Indonesians Without abandoning hostilities, the Dutch began to look for roundabout ways of strengthening their hold on the country All kinds of blackmail and pressure were brought to bear on the Indonesian government to make it agree to the negotiations which culminated in the Lingadjati Treaty initialled in November 1946

The Treaty recognised the de facto existence of the republic on Java, Madura and Sumatra Instead of a single centralised state, it insisted on a federation comprising the puppet states created by the Dutch on the islands of Kalimantan and the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago, in addition to the existing Republic The Treaty called for the establishment of a Netherlands-Indonesian union under the aegis of the Dutch crown

Nor were the Dutch colonialists satisfied, even then After the official ratification of the Lingadjati Treaty in March 1947, they continued to exert pressure on the young Republic

Their ultimatum of May 27, 1947 to the Sutan Sjahrir government contained demands for the formation of a new cabinet under their control and the subordination of the police, foreign trade and finances to the Dutch authori-

ties Sjahrir s readiness to accept the ultimatum evoked nationwide resentment The mood of the Indonesian people was expressed in Sjarifuddin s scathing criticism of Sjahrir s policy of capitulation The pressure of public opinion forced the Sjahrir government to resign

Amir Sjarifuddin was entrusted to form a new cabinet This coincided with the unleashing of a Dutch offensive all along the front, in the course of which the colonialists seized two thirds of Java, including the towns of Djakarta, Semarang and Surabaya Only a small part of the country was left in the hands of the Sjarifuddin government The independence of Indonesia was in great danger

The first step of the new government was to flatly reject the Dutch ultimatum Speaking over the Djokjakarta radio on July 16, 1947, Sjarifuddin declared that "the government of the Indonesian Republic has turned down the Dutch demands with a full sense of its responsibility We want peace and justice We have tried to solve our political problems by peaceful means, but our efforts have been rendered futile by the Dutch demands, which run counter to the solution of those problems "

In an order to the armed forces of the Republic, Amir declared "This order will again demonstrate to the whole world our desire to preserve peace It is further proof that the Indonesian people are trying in every way to strengthen their national unity and maintain discipline It is quite possible that the Dutch will persist in their provocations Everybody knows that the Dutch command has constantly staged such provocations and sabotaged the terms of the cease fire We must accordingly reply to the manoeuvres of the Dutch reaction by consolidating the united front of the Republic '

The new offensive by the Dutch army against the young Republic aroused the fierce indignation of the Indonesian people, who were fully resolved to defend their liberty and independence On November 15, 1947, the Youth Congress

which brought together all the youth organisations of Indonesia addressed an appeal to the democratic youth of the world "This is a life and death question for the young Indonesians who have decided to fight to the bitter end for independence and liberty against Dutch aggression and colonial wars," said the appeal The young people of Indonesia are marching in the front ranks of this fierce struggle " The Congress urged the youth of the whole world to rally to the support of the just cause of the Indonesian people The Conference of Indonesian Socialist Youth sent out a call for the consolidation of the Republic s defences for the organisation of nationwide resistance to the Dutch aggressors and the utmost assistance to the Sjarifuddin government

Replying to the Dutch threat of a renewal of their broad offensive against the Republic, the Indonesian trade union leader Harjono declared that all the workers would defend it to the last breath

Progressive Indonesia rallied to Sjarifuddin s support Thanks to his efforts, the innumerable armed detachments formed by different parties and organisations quickly joined forces under the united command of the Indonesian National Army

New units of the Indonesian army kept leaving for the front as soon as they were formed On receiving their weapons soldiers lined up in the central squares of the cities

In Djokjakarta, units bound for the front waited for Sjarifuddin to put in an appearance They hailed him as a brother

Dear friends, victory belongs to us," he told them The hour calls for one thing—courage courage and again courage Fight like heroes for your country! '

'Amir, Amir! Merdeka! Freedom! was the soldiers' answering cry

At one of the numerous press conferences Sjarifuddin

held in order to mobilise public opinion in support of the Republic, he addressed himself to progressive mankind in the following terms

Our people are fully determined to win their independence We foresee great difficulties and much bloodshed ahead, we know that further sacrifices await us But we are strong, and will stand up to them We are not alone in this struggle Millions of honest people all over the world regard our movement with sympathy I would like to ask the gentlemen of the press to put that in the reports to their newspapers "

The Indonesian people s fight for independence did indeed have the warm sympathy of working people all over In India Indo China Malaya Australia the Arab countries, the United States Holland and elsewhere democratic public organisations took up the cudgels in defence of the Indonesian people and came to their help Many Indian soldiers serving with the British forces remained in Indonesia to form a volunteer corps and fight on the side of the Indonesian Republic Indian civic organisations contributed doctors and large consignments of medical supplies In September 1947 the trade unions of Australia boycotted Dutch ships bound for Indonesia and demanded that the Australian government close all of Holland s bases in Australia At a meeting in Rangoon, the Muslims of Burma condemned the Dutch aggression and pledged themselves to help the Indonesian people

The Malayan Democratic Youth issued a call for a boycott of Dutch ships, and asked the authorities not to allow them entry into the port of Singapore

The Communists of Holland staunchly upheld the cause of the Indonesian people and urged the cessation of the colonial war in Indonesia

Indonesians were grateful for the sympathy of the Soviet peoples and for the speeches of the USSR representative in the U N General Assembly in support of their country The 30th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution

was made an occasion for festivities in many Indonesian ci ties Young soldiers of Sjarifuddin s army sat in the crowded motion picture houses of Djokjakarta with their rifles tightly clasped in their hands, and watched with bated breath scenes of the Soviet people s heroic defence of the legendary Stalin grad Many of them had made it a point to see the film before leaving for the front

Sjarifuddin took time off from his many other duties to talk to a Soviet journalist He understood the impor tance of the Soviet Union's support and example for his country

"As I left the premises of the Information Ministry", the Soviet journalist related, 'I was overtaken by an emplo yee

" The Premier will see you this evening at nine, if that's convenient,' the man informed me graciously

"I arrived at Amir Sjarifuddin s house on the dot It was a simple place like most houses in Djokjakarta There were guards posted at the fence, and as I walked up to the gate a guard indicated that I was expected The soldiers saluted

"'Merdeka! Merdeka!

"Amir Sjarifuddin came down the steps to greet me He smiled and invited me in

"The Premier's study looked more like a student's den Books, books, books everywhere I noticed the works of Marx and Lenin among them Amir warned me laughingly that he would not let me go until I had told him everything of significance about Soviet life

"'You must know that the truth about the Soviet Union and its life is very dear to us,' he said

"And there was little indeed that did not interest Sjari fuddin

"'Tell me what Moscow looks like What kind of a city is it,' he wanted to know I described Moscow, the Red Square, Lenin's Mausoleum and the holiday demonstrations of the people rejoicing in their freedom

"Sjarifuddin listened attentively and after a moment's thought put in

Our situation is very complicated Things are very hard indeed

"He stopped again and resumed

'I know that in 1917 things were even harder in Russia That is understandable—the Russians were the first to blaze a trail But don't forget—the revolutionary movement in Russia was headed by your iron Party Oh, if we had such a party now we would dump the imperialist scum into the sea That's the kind of party we need The iron must be forged now, while it's hot!'

"Sjarifuddin went on to say that lasting ties had not been established as yet between the working class and peasantry that the national democratic front was not sufficiently united that the leaders of the bourgeois parties were a wavering, manoeuvring, scheming, intriguing lot disloyal to the ideals of the national liberation movement

''Hang those petty politicos!' he cried in anger 'Many ministers and highly placed officials affiliated with Rightist groups are sabotaging the orders of the government for reasons of their own, and so bringing disorder and chaos into our common work, and playing into the enemy's hands '

"Sjarifuddin spoke of the importance to the Republic of a genuinely revolutionary army

'But we are terribly short of arms, he despaired 'All we can put up against the American and British tanks used by the Dutch are the old guns we captured as trophies, bamboo spears and bottles of inflammables We have no heavy, no metal working industries For centuries the imperialists deliberately kept them from developing, all they wanted in Indonesia was a source of raw materials and a cheap market for their stale goods '

"His anger grew

"'But we shall create our own industries and learn to

make our own weapons. We need time! Time—how badly we need it now....'

"It was late at night when we parted. Sjarifuddin put an arm around my shoulder and saw me to his car. I was driven to my hotel in the company of two of his guards...."

The measures taken by the Sjarifuddin government to unite all national patriotic forces for the fight against the Dutch military offensive involved the Dutch imperialists in a long colonial war against the whole Indonesian nation. In addition to their seizure of the ports, communications and industrial towns with the aim of subjecting the Republic to blockade and disrupting domestic trade, the colonialists retaliated by trying to dismember Indonesia and set up separate puppet states. Helped by their agents inside the country, they were able to form several such "states" by the beginning of 1948. Among their objectives in establishing these "states" was the overthrow of the undesirable, to them, Sjarifuddin government. In January 1948, the Dutch military authorities formed a provisional federal council made up of representatives of these "states", who were either members of the feudal aristocracy, old Dutch officials, or simply shady politicians. The task of the council was to prepare the ground for the formation of a provisional federal government of Indonesia. The Dutch colonialists tried to depict the colonial war they had instigated as a conflict between the "lawful" Indonesian government and "rebels".

At the same time they took insidious steps, with the backing of American members of the U.N. mission then in Indonesia, to break up Sjarifuddin's coalition government. The Indonesian press reported that Premier Beel of Holland intended to remove Sjarifuddin and his supporters from the government and form a reactionary cabinet of Masjumi Party members.

In December 1947, Beel and Graham, the American member of the U.N. "good-will mission", began to plot with the leaders of the Masjumi behind Sjarifuddin's back.

As a result of this conspiracy between the Dutch colonial ists and the reaction, the Masjumi launched a campagn for the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Dutch on terms dic tated by the latter Everything was so arranged that the Sjarifuddin government would have to come to terms with none other than spokesmen of the puppet states! In giving those traitors to the interests of the Indonesian people pow ers to negotiate with Sjarifuddin on their behalf, the Dutch thought they could wring bigger concessions from the Repub lic Among the demands the Dutch colonialists expected the peace treaty to satisfy was the formation of a United States of Indonesia, consisting of the Republic of Indonesia plus the puppet states, and recognition by the new federation of the supremacy of the Dutch crown Speaking for the delegation from the Republic Amir Sjarifuddin demanded that Holland recognise the independence of the Republic and stop fanning the separatist movement of its own brewing

On January 13, the Dutch handed the Republic an ultimatum either it accepted the Dutch demands by January 15, or an all out front offensive would be launched by the Dutch army The American representative, Graham, lashed himself into a fury of activity behind the scenes

After negotiations between Sjarifuddin, President of the Republic Sukarno and Vice President Hatta, the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch side concluded a cease fire truce on board the *Renville* The truce, signed on January 17, sliced off another big piece of the Republic s territory

Here is a description of its conclusion on board the *Renville* by a correspondent who witnessed the event

"The faces of the representatives of the Republic were grave Amir Sjarifuddin looked particularly sad He knew he was assuming a tremendous responsibility in putting his signature to that shackling 'agreement' How would the people take that enforced step? That is what worried him, it was apparent what tremendous effort it cost him to retain his composure and self control

"As to the head of the Dutch delegation, Abdul Kadir, his Dutch advisers kept passing notes to him and whispering into his ear His eyes darted uneasily, and he strained his ears to catch every word his masters let drop

"'He actually resembles a puppet, remarked the correspondent beside me, as though he had read my thoughts

" Abdul Kadir rose to read out what was written in English on the sheet of paper in his hand Several of the correspondents shrugged their shoulders why in English?

"There was nothing new in his speech It repeated the all too familiar Dutch claims concerning Holland's unassailable rights in Indonesia

"Then Amir Sjarifuddin got up Adjusting his eye glasses, he began to speak in the Indonesian language Many of his hearers gasped Until now only two languages, English and Dutch, had been accepted as working languages This was a challenge!

"Sjarifuddin's speech was short and, as usual, to the point In the name of his people he declared firmly that Indonesia desired only to be free

"'Free, only free!', he repeated the sacred word several times

"That was followed by the procedure of signing the cease fire documents, which set forth the political principles of the regulation of the Dutch Indonesian conflict

"Sjarifuddin came up to me He had a weary and sad look, and seemed the only person in the whole boisterous assemblage who realised what had happened We stood at the railing

"'The situation is grave My government is under terrible pressure from foreign powers and the Rightist parties which are betraying the people ' He spoke softly

"Within a day he was to fly to Djakarta, and he already knew that the leaders of the Masjumi Party meant to demand the resignation of his cabinet "

The Renville Agreement was exploited by the Indonesian reaction to overthrow the Sjarifuddin government Soon after

its conclusion, the Masjumists, on whose insistence it was signed, displayed a radical change of heart and resigned from the Sjarifuddin cabinet on the pretext that a stronger cabinet" was needed

In reply to the hypocritical stand of the Masjumi and other reactionary parties, the progressive organisations of the country headed by the Communist Party issued a state ment protesting against the reaction's proposed reshuffling of the cabinet They appealed to all parties to work for unity and rally around the Sjarifuddin government so that the whole nation might present a united front in this difficult hour for the country

But the Masjumi ministers persisted in their plan and left the cabinet At the end of January 1948, the Sjarifuddin cabinet had to resign M Hatta, a reactionary, was asked to form a new cabinet

Speaking of the composition of the cabinet formed by Hatta, the Antara Agency said plainly on February 1, 1948, that there were pro American elements in it

The news of the resignation of the Sjarifuddin cabinet came as a shock to the wide public On January 24, thousands of people demonstrated on the streets of Djokjakarta, then the capital of the Republic They demanded the return of the Sjarifuddin government to office The huge crowd that filled the square in front of the President s palace chanted

"Long live bung Amir! We want the Sjarifuddin cabinet! Long live Amir Sjarifuddin s democratic government!"

Demonstrations demanding the return of the Sjarifuddin cabinet took place in many other cities on Java and Sumatra The demonstrators carried portraits of Sjarifuddin and other democratic leaders At their meetings, the people said that unless a cabinet headed by Sjarifuddin were formed, "the workers and peasants would find a way of reinstating the de mocratic government" Workers in many cities threatened to call monster strikes and engage in sabotage and boycott unless the Sjarifuddin government were brought back The

newspaper *Berita Indonesia* said in its issue of February 2, 1948, that "without the participation of members of the work ing class peasantry and youth, without the participation of outstanding leaders like Sjarifuddin and Setiadjit, without the democratic elements, no government is representative The Hatta cabinet is therefore not representative '

The treacherous policy of the Right Socialists Sutan Sjahrir and the Masjumists, who had for so long posed as pa triots and champions of the country s liberation, only went to show once more that the support of the wide masses was essential to the solution of its difficulties

In February 1948, a People's Democratic Front headed by Sjarifuddin was formed at the suggestion of the Communist Party Besides the Communist Party it comprised the Soci alist Party (after the exclusion of the Sjahrir faction) the Party of Labour, the Indonesian Socialist Youth, and the All Indonesian Central Trade Union Federation The programme of the People's Democratic Front, in the drafting of which Amir had a big hand called for a stop to negotiations with the Dutch colonialists until they withdrew from the terri tory of the Republic and for the nationalisation of Dutch property in Indonesia

The People's Democratic Front put forward a proposal for the establishment of a broad national government in which all the national parties and organisations would be represented The Hatta cabinet raised all kinds of objections to its adoption

Sjarifuddin welcomed the arrival of Manovar Musso and his "New Road for Indonesia" programme, which clearly delineated the prospects of the people s struggle to complete the national liberation revolution At the August 1948 Plen ary Meeting of the Central Committee, Sjarifuddin was again elected a member of the Political Bureau From then on he and Musso worked actively to unite all the national patriotic forces of the country Side by side they stood up to the enemy's challenge during the "Madiun events"

When Manovar Musso was killed in an unequal clash with the enemies of the revolution Amir Sjarifuddin and his detachment were operating in the vicinity of the Lawu Volcano, some 60 or 70 kilometres from the place where Musso died Amir was too weak to move, and his comrades, exhausted by the fighting with a well armed Hatta punitive force, had to carry their commander In December, Sjarifuddin's detachment came up against a large enemy group Sjarifuddin was captured and secretly thrown into prison along with Suripno, Darusman Harjono and other prominent Communists

Late in the evening of December 19, 1948, an army unit halted at the village of Ngalian, in eastern Java The villagers were accustomed to such visits During the Madiun events ' the area had often been combed by Hatta punitive detachments on the look out for Communists and other patriots

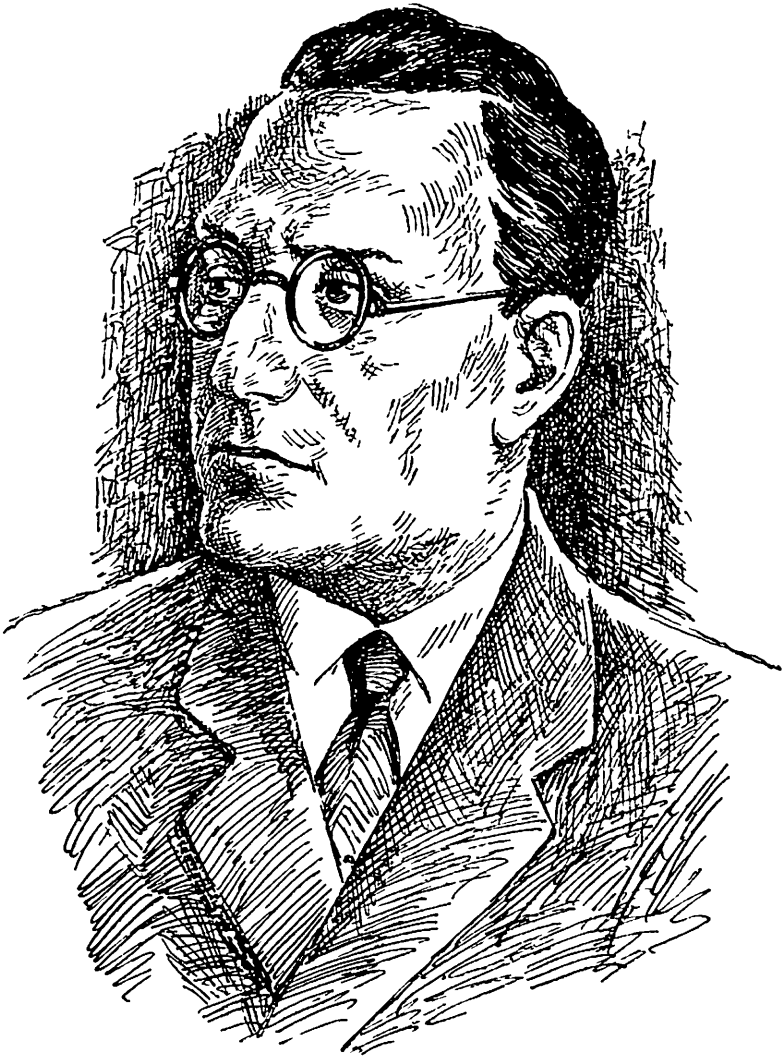
But what happened that night, between the 19th and 20th of December, sent a shudder of horror through people all over the world That night, on Hatta's orders, eleven outstanding leaders of the Communist Party of Indonesia were brutally done to death Among them were Amir Sjarifuddin, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party and former premier of the Indonesian Republic, and the Political Bureau members Suripno, Sardjono, Darusman

Before the execution they sang the "Internationale" They were shot singly When Amir Sjarifuddin s turn came, he shouted 'Workers of all lands, unite! I go to my death for you!"

It is told that after Amir Sjarifuddin and his comrades were shot, the officer in charge of the execution went up to the bodies and emptied several bullets into each as if scared that they might rise from the dead And the reaction was indeed afraid of them, even dead It was fear of the people's wrath that made the Indonesian reaction try to cover up the crime by spreading the rumour that Sjarifuddin was hiding

in the jungles of Java and pressing the fight against the government Then the vicious lie was circulated that Amir had been killed by his own comrades Not until six months later did the Indonesian government admit, in reply to the insistent inquiries of people in many countries, that Amir Sjarifuddin, distinguished leader of the national liberation revolution, a man acclaimed by the whole world, had been executed

Amir Sjarifuddin Communist, patriot and fighter, lives in the hearts of the world proletariat



Taqı Eranı

Taqi Erani

One of the luminous figures in the glorious chronicle of the Iranian people s struggle for their liberty and inde pendence, Dr Taqi Erani was a man of remarkable endow ments and encyclopedic knowledge, a scholar of note, a belov ed teacher of the youth Dr Erani gave up a brilliant career for the arduous calling of a professional revolutionary His erudition, his ability, his fervent heart, all his life were dedicated to the fight for the freedom and happiness of his oppressed countrymen

Childhood Years

Taqi Erani was born on September 3, 1902, in the city of Tabriz His father, Abulfath Erani, was a fiscal agent in the Iranian Finance Ministry It was a post many of his colleagues turned to their personal advantage, amassing fortunes by plundering and deceiving the people, and buying themselves ranks and titles But Abulfath was an honest man and went his own way He did his iob conscientiously and when possible tried to alleviate the toilers' hard lot

The Erani family moved to Teheran in 1907 Abulfath's duties often called him away to the provinces for long periods of time Care of the home and children was left entirely to Taqi's hard working, kind and loving mother, who managed her household affairs capably and gave Taqi and his two sisters a good upbringing

Taqi was an intelligent youngster with an inquiring mind Of evenings, when Abulfath was home the boy drank in his father's accounts of everything he had seen and heard in other parts of the country They were not very cheering, these accounts of the abject poverty and suffering of the people and their maltreatment at the hands of the feudals and government agents His father's stories sank deep into Taqi's impressionable mind

A diligent and unusually apt pupil Taqi revealed penchant for the study of the natural sciences

On finishing secondary school in 1920, he entered the Teheran Medical College His choice of profession was well-motivated, for doctors were scarce in Iran at the time (or today, for that matter), and epidemics literally mowed down the population of the towns, while in the villages it was even worse Doctors were needed to combat disease, and Erani decided to dedicate himself to that noble field of public service

Beginning of the Struggle

While Taqi was busy with his studies at secondary school and college, revolutionary events were rocking his land The period from 1918 to 1921 was marked by a tempestuous upswing in the national liberation movement of Iran

The victory of the October Revolution in Russia and consolidation of Soviet government exerted a tremendous revolutionising influence on the neighbouring countries Soviet Russia, at whose helm stood V I Lenin, great friend of the oppressed peoples of the East, had proclaimed and was

implementing a policy of peace and friendship with all nations based on principles of complete equality In keeping with Lenin s noble foreign policy, the Soviet government with drew the Russian army from Iran annulled all the treaties and agreements the former tsarist government had forced on Iran, and handed over gratis to the Iranian people tsarist holdings in Iran valued at more than 100 million gold rou bles

With the victory of the October Revolution and the for mation of the Soviet state along its northern frontiers, the opportunity of ending British domination presented itself to Iran But the Iranian reaction chose to ignore that opportunity In 1918 the British army was in occupation of practically the whole of Iran Abetted by their agents in the Iranian ruling clique the imperialists fettered the Iranian people in August 1919 with a treaty which gave the British control of the Iranian army and police, the finances, communications customs and other departments of the Iranian admini stration

Britain's colonial policy in Iran and the subservience of the Iranian government aroused widespread discontent in Iranian society At meetings and demonstrations all over the country people called for an end to British rule

The 1st Congress of the Iranian Communist Party took place at Enzeli (now Pahlavi) in the summer of 1920 * It brought together the flower of the nation At this Congress a Party programme and charter were adopted and the goals acclaimed of achieving liberty and happiness for the Iranian people and delivering the land from British colonial rule The immediate tasks the Party placed before its members were expulsion of the foreign imperialists and abolition of the monarchy and of feudal survivals The Congress also out-

* A Social Democratic group called Adalat was formed in Iran in 1916 It soon came to be known as the Adalat Party At the 1st Con gress of the Adalat Party in June 1920 it was renamed the Communist Party of Iran

lined steps to strengthen the national economy and raise the people's living standards

The national liberation movement reached its peak in the northern provinces of Iranian Azerbaijan, Gilan and others In April 1920, an armed revolt against the central government and its backers the British imperialists flared up in Iranian Azerbaijan Its leader was the prominent Azerbaijan democrat, Sheik Mohammad Hiabani The rebels renamed Iranian Azerbaijan "Azadistan" or "Land of Freedom' and took over the government offices in Tabriz driving the governor and officials appointed by the Iranian government out of the town A number of democratic reforms were instituted prices on foodstuffs reduced, etc A national government of Iranian Azerbaijan headed by Hiabani was formally set up in June 1920

That same year the revolutionary forces took over in Gilan, and on June 4 1920, the Republic of Gilan was proclaimed The Communists entered into its government which adopted the goals of resisting the British imperialists, overthrowing the Shah's regime and opposing feudal hangovers One of its key targets was the seizure of Teheran

The victories scored by the rebels in Iranian Azerbaijan and Gilan electrified the whole country A mighty wave of popular wrath swept the pro British Vosuq ed Dauleh government overboard, its successor the Moshir ed Dauleh government, sought to curb British influence in Iran to some extent and halted the implementation of the Anglo Iranian agreement of 1919

It was at about this time that the Soviet Union and Iran entered into negotiations to establish diplomatic relations Despite the attempts of the British imperialists and their Iranian flunkeys to obstruct the negotiations these culminated in 1921 in the conclusion of a Treaty on Friendship which opened up a new chapter in the relations of the two neighbour countries It was the first equitable treaty Iran had ever concluded with any great power The conclusion

of such a treaty with Soviet Russia created favourable conditions for the consolidation of Iranian sovereignty and the emancipation of the country from colonial dependence All the progressive and democratic elements of Iranian society welcomed it

Not so the Iranian reaction, which did its utmost to prevent the realisation of the Soviet Iranian agreement Its full text was not published and attempts were made to prevent the Soviet ambassador's arrival in the country

Simultaneously the Iranian ruling clique concentrated its efforts on crushing the national liberation movement, above all in Iranian Azerbaijan and Gilan

The rebellion which had raged for more than five months in Iranian Azerbaijan was put down in September 1920, and 1 year later the Republic of Gilan ceased to exist

The Iranian people did not lay down arms, however The summer of 1921 saw another uprising erupt in Khorasan, in the northeastern part of the country It was headed by the local commander of the army and gendarmerie, Colonel Mohammad Taqi khan, and called for the democratisation of the country, the expulsion of the British, and the liberation of Iran from imperialist oppression For three months the army of the central government tried unsuccessfully to quell it

In February 1922, armed action broke out again under anti imperialist and democratic slogans in Iranian Azerbaijan Its leader was an officer in the Iranian gendarmerie, Abolkasem Lahuti This rising was soon crushed too

Political life had reached a feverish pitch by this time in the Iranian capital Large meetings and demonstrations were held in Teheran and other cities Anti government and anti imperialist leaflets passed from hand to hand The heated political debates and arguments as to Iran's future that sputtered among the students reflected the general mood

Young Taqi was an unfailing participant in all these political events He began to take part in demonstrations

when he was a boy of seventeen, still at school As he later recalled, these popular demonstrations ignited his fighting spirit and gripped his very soul From that time on he identified himself with the revolutionary struggle of his people for their freedom and happiness

Shaping of a Marxist Outlook

Seeking for an answer to the question of how to terminate foreign rule and lead Iran onto the road of untrammelled progress, Erani turned his gaze to Soviet Russia, the first workers' state in the world Increasingly he felt the challenge of the victorious ideas of communism, which had led to the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy and the establishment of a workers and peasants' government in Russia

It was hardly possible at that time to make a deep study of Marxism in Iran, where the theories of Marx were as yet little known True, the Iranian Social Democrats had introduced Marxism to the Iranians in the leaflets and appeals they had disseminated and in their oral propaganda A translation of part of the *Communist Manifesto* into the Persian language had appeared in Iran in 1909 The translation was undertaken at the suggestion of G K Ordjonikidze* when he was in Gilan In addition, G K Ordjonikidze had organised an international club in Resht which engaged in revolutionary work of broad scope It became a rendezvous of the workers, artisans and peasants, where they could hear talks on the life of the toiling people and the importance of the workers and peasants fighting unitedly for land, freedom and a better life

It was plain to Erani, however, that for a thorough study of the progressive revolutionary theories of the century he must go abroad He decided to go to Europe

First he tried to join one of the university groups whose

*G K Ordjonikidze—an outstanding leader of the Soviet country and the USSR Communist Party

studies in Europe were financed by the Iranian government When nothing came of it, he left for Germany in 1922 on his own and matriculated in the department of physics and chemistry at the University of Berlin

To study he had to work For several years he was employed as a proofreader in the Kaviyani printing plant which published literature in the Persian Working and studying, Erani successfully completed his university course and in 1928 gave a brilliant presentation of a Doctor's thesis on the subject of the "Physiological and Restorative Properties of Hypophosphate"

Dr Erani stayed on in Germany for another two years He lectured at the University of Berlin on logics and rhetoric and on Persian and Arabic poetry

Throughout these years, Erani pursued his study of Marxism Leninism He was interested in philosophy, sociology, political economy and history, and was highly conversant with the Marxist literature published in Germany He also hunted up books and pamphlets published in other European countries, a task facilitated by his knowledge of German, French and English Within a comparatively short time he was so proficient in revolutionary theory that his friends and comrades dubbed him "the walking encyclopedia"

The political situation in Germany was influential in moulding Erani's Marxist outlook The working class movement in Germany was in its ascendancy, and the guiding force in the struggle of the German proletariat was the Communist Party

Erani was the author of many fundamental works on Marxist philosophy In his early *Psychology*, written in 1927, he touched on some of the most important problems of Marxist philosophy the general concatenation and inter dependence of objects and phenomena in nature and society, the unity and conflict of opposites, the transition from quantitative to qualitative changes Many of his definitions of philosophical concepts were drawn from F Engels' *The Dialectics of*

Nature His fullest and most detailed exposition of problems of Marxist philosophy may be found in his *Dialectical Materialism*, written in Teheran shortly after his return from Germany

Erani was also a student of literature While in Germany he published books about Saadi, *The Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, Nasir i Khusrau s *Zafar Nama* and *The Aspect of Faith*, as well as the works of Ubaid-i Zakani

The 2nd Congress of the Iranian Communist Party which met illegally in the town of Urmia (Rezaiyeh) in 1927 adopted a new Party programme and elected a new Central Committee

Following that Congress, the Party considerably improved its organisational and propaganda methods It decided to set up a foreign propaganda centre, directed by the Central Committee member Soltan Zade, whose function it would be to publish Party literature and smuggle that literature into Iran, and to maintain contacts with the Iranian students enrolled in educational establishments in Germany, France and other European countries

From its Berlin headquarters, the foreign propaganda centre of the Iranian Communist Party brought out the newspaper *Peykar* (Struggle) In Vienna it organised the publication of the journal *Setare ye Sorkh* (Red Star) Another of its periodicals was the *Beyraq e Enqelab* (Banner of the Revolution) In Germany it formed the underground Union of Struggle Against the Despotic Regime of Riza Shah, which attracted the most intelligent young Iranians studying in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany Erani joined this organisation and later became its head Its members took a big part in compiling and printing Party periodicals They issued leaflets and proclamations denouncing the reactionary domestic and foreign policies of the Iranian government and demanding freedom and democracy for their country

Struggle Legal and Illegal

In 1930 and 1931, the Communist Party of Iran intensified its activities among the workers Underground Party organisations were established in many towns Numerous strikes were led by the Communists, among them the strike of the match factory workers in Tabriz early in 1930 and that of 400 textile workers at the huge Watan Mills in Isfahan in May 1931 The owner of Watan rejected the strikers' demands and threatened them with reprisals The workers answered by demonstrating in the streets in an organised fashion, and then gathering on the central square of Isfahan to repeat their demands The placards and red streamers they carried bore the slogans 'Long Live the Unity of All Iranian Workers!", 'Workers of All Lands, Unite!"

The textile workers won the strike, while the mill owner had to pull in his horns and cede their demands for the reduc tion of the working day from twelve to nine hours and a 20 per cent wage increase The practice of searching the workers as they left the premises was also discontinued The strike was led to victory by one of the underground organisations of the Communist Party of Iran

Earlier, in May 1929, the workers of the Anglo Iranian Oil Company had called what was numerically the biggest strike action ever taken in Iran Nine thousand oil workers stayed out for three days, demanding higher wages, a shorter day, recognition of the union, observance of May Day as a working class holiday, participation by labour in the settle ment of questions of hire and dismissal of workers, etc The strike was violently broken up by the combined forces of the British imperialists and Iranian reactionaries

On his return to his country in 1930, Dr Erani immedia tely plunged into active Party work, following a plan he had drawn up while in Germany He maintained that Party work had to be conducted on two planes political education of the masses and building up the Party organisationally He

pointed out that educational and propaganda work could be either legal or illegal, but that building up the Party organisationally had to be done on a conspirational basis, with the utmost caution and an eye to self protection

Dr Erani's first job in Teheran was in a military chemical plant, but later he went over to teaching physics and chemistry From 1936 until his arrest in April 1937, he directed the educational department of the Ministry of Industries Wherever he worked, he did not forget his duty as a Party member to further the organisation and education of the masses But the course of events in his country kept him from fully realising his plan for the development of Party work

Alarmed by the growing militancy of the Iranian Communist Party and its affiliated trade unions, the Iranian authorities declared war on them. In May 1931, the cabinet drafted an anti communist bill and submitted it to the Majlis for ratification The feudals and big landowners seated in the Majlis did not stop long to "debate" it In June, the draconic bill was passed, the Communist Party outlawed, and long prison terms introduced for membership in the Party

The anti communist law was invoked to wreck Party, trade union, youth and other democratic organisations The Party's branches in Abadan, Teheran, Qazvin, Tabriz, Meshed, Resht Pahlavi and other towns were smashed Many active members of the Party, the trade unions and other democratic organisations were thrown behind bars Most of the Central Committee members elected at the 2nd Party Congress were arrested In the space of two years more than two thousand progressive Iranians were put in prison where they endured every manner of torture and abuse Several prominent Iranian revolutionaries were cruelly done to death in prison In the summer of 1931, the Executive of the Anti Imperialist League protested in the name of the people of the whole world against this brutal treatment of political prisoners

The reaction also tried to undermine the Iranian Communist Party s organisations in other countries The Iranian government filed a suit in a German court against its nationals residing in Germany, and simultaneously instituted proceedings against the newspaper *Peykar* While the Leipzig court refused to see anything criminal in the activities of the Iranian democrats and rejected the suit against them as groundless, the pressure from Teheran did result in restrictions on the publishing activities of the Iranian Communist Party in Germany

The passage of the Law of 1931 made Party work more hazardous than ever It gave police sleuths the rights to nose about and look for sedition in every corner But the Communists of Iran and with them Erani were not easily frightened Dr Erani went on teaching as before and enjoyed the highest respect of his students The erudition of the young physics and chemistry teacher impressed one and all Pupils of a number of secondary schools in Teheran, among them "Dar ol fonun", where Erani had once studied himself, petitioned the Ministry of Education to let him lecture on physics and chemistry at their schools

Dr Erani participated in student debates and often lectured at clubhouses, invariably drawing large crowds He used every lesson and every speech he gave to propagate the ideas of communism and the great teaching of Marxism

He attached enormous importance to raising the revolutionary spirit of the intellectuals, who he said were appointed to arm the Iranian working class with revolutionary theory and prepare it for the coming battles for its liberation

He wrote many books on history and dialectical and historical materialism, as well as several textbooks for secondary schools

His philosophical works include *Mysticism and Materialism*, *Man From the Standpoint of Materialism*, *Dialectical Materialism*, *Scientific Theories*, etc His textbooks and educational aids appeared under the general title of "Series on

the Foundations of the Exact Sciences", into which entered his four volume *Foundations of Physics*, *Foundations of Chemistry* in four volumes, *Foundations of Psychology*, *General and Individual*, and *Foundations of Biology* As Erani pointed out in the preface to the first volume of the 'Series", they were all written from the standpoint of dialectical materialism It is significant that they have not lost their scientific validity to this day

Teaching and the writing of books and pamphlets did not fully satisfy Dr Erani He was convinced that a periodical was absolutely necessary in systematic propaganda work and eagerly undertook to get one going The authorities were in no hurry to answer his solicitations but with some effort he finally received a permit and early in 1934 brought out the first issue of the monthly *Donya* or "Peace" Explaining its aims, he said The journal *Donya* presents problems of science, technology, social life and art from a materialist point of view That will determine its historic role "

A special place in the biography of Dr Erani, as in the history of the Communist Party of Iran, must be reserved for the journal *Donya* With its help, Dr Erani spread the ideas of Marxism Leninism and fanned the revolutionary spirit of the younger generation, through it he sounded the call for battle against the reactionary order in the country, against colonialism and imperialism

The journal carried many articles and larger works by Erani on key problems of Marxism Leninism It was here that he published his 'Mysticism and Materialism", 'Man From the Standpoint of Materialism', "Freedom and Necessity", 'Dialectical Materialism", "Law and Materialism", "Women and Materialism", etc In 'Mysticism and Materialism' and 'Dialectical Materialism" he reviewed the history of Marxist philosophy and showed that dialectical materialism was the highest accomplishment of scientific thought Unfortunately, some of his philosophical writings were seized by the police and never saw the light of day

It goes without saying that the strict censorship enforced in Iran made it anything but easy to carry on Party propaganda The material in the journal had to be couched in terms that would render it invulnerable to attack, and at the same time suit its high theoretical purpose His literary skill and wide learning enabled Dr Erani to cope with the task and keep the censors at bay

Donya fearlessly castigated the oppression of the peoples of the East by the British, French and German imperialists It criticised the misanthropic race superiority theory and hit out at both the German fascists and the American racists It gave considerable space to exposures of warmongering by German fascists and Japanese militarists

Dr Erani was a true friend of the Soviet Union He val ued the Soviet state s sincere policy of friendship for Iran That policy inspired by principles of equality, mutual respect and non interference in one another's internal affairs, was in Iran's vital interest His journal gave prominence to the cultural and economic achievements of the Soviet people, it supported the peace loving foreign policy of the Soviet Union and its tireless efforts for peace and friendship

Dr Erani's articles in *Donya* were eagerly read by its young readers and the intelligentsia They came to rely on them for a correct assessment of developments inside and outside their country and to keep them abreast of progressive ideas

Donya was closed down in 1935—but not before it had done a very important job Its role in the revolutionary education of the Iranian youth can hardly be overestimated Several years after it was closed its articles were used by the People's Party of Iran successor to the Iranian Communist Party, to train fresh contingents for the working class cause

The anti communist law adopted in June 1931 pursued big and sinister aims Through it the Iranian reaction hoped to forestall anti British action and legalise the plunder of

the country's resources by the Anglo Iranian Oil Company In 1933, a treaty was concluded between Iran and Britain prolonging the latter's oil concession for another sixty years

Following the conclusion of that plunderous treaty, the Iranian reaction, apprehensive of renewed anti government outbursts, intensified its repressive police measures throughout the country Brutal as they were these measures failed to bring revolutionary activity in Iran to a complete stand still

In 1934, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran decided to regenerate its organisations A leading Party nucleus of three men was set up in Teheran As a member of the nucleus, Dr Erani was made responsible for the organisational work among the students and intellectuals

His approach to the job at hand won over to the side of the Party the flower of the Iranian youth and intelligentsia, among whom he set up a network of Party units He made it a practice to receive school and college students at his home and to mingle with them on their athletic grounds and other gathering places Domestic and foreign affairs were discussed during their get togethers and Dr Erani enlightened his hearers on the vital political issues of the day

He acquainted the most capable and reliable of them with the Marxist literature and began to initiate them into revolutionary work In due time he gave these comrades important assignments to carry out among their fellow students and intellectuals Thus he trained helpers who with him recruited new Party members and built up the Party ranks

Between 1934 and 1937 Dr Erani and his helpers organized student strikes in various Teheran educational establishments, some of which were successful

After *Donya* was closed in the summer of 1935 Dr Erani turned his attention to the establishment of an underground printshop, which was soon ready to publish the material he and his comrades wrote pamphlets, appeals, leaflets and messages from the Communist Party to the people The dis

tribution of this illegal literature was so skilfully handled that it took the police a long time to discover the location of the shop

The extensive underground activity of the Communists of Iran has been acknowledged by the Iranian press *Iranian Annals of 1961* noted, for instance, that the Communist Party of Iran was the only party to conduct active political work in the country between 1931 and 1936

The Trial of the Fifty-Three

The police finally tracked down Erani and his friends In April 1937, he and fifty two of his comrades were arrested and incarcerated in Teheran's Qasr dungeon, where largely political prisoners were kept It was the worst prison in Teheran said to have several entrances but no exits Those of its inmates who did not die at the hands of their torturers were often killed by disease

From the moment they were arrested, the members of Erani's group were subjected to the worst treatment their jailers could invent to break their will and crush them mo rally and physically Once, to brace up his comrades, Erani sent them a note urging them not to surrender to despair or panic and, above all, not to betray their comrades

The note fell into the hands of the police, and suspicion settled on Erani He was placed in a punishment cell, and remained in solitary confinement for seven long months in the autumn and winter of 1937 1938 He was deprived not only of his bed clothes and personal garments, but even of the little cotton rug he had formerly used as a mattress He was obliged to sleep on a bare cement floor which was swashed with water every day By such outrageous methods did his torturers try to sap the will and stamina of a militant Communist

Alone with himself in the depressing prison atmosphere, Dr Erani, a man of great vigour, had to find some way of

occupying himself He decided to order his life as before his arrest

His "work day" began as usual with morning jerks After breakfast (a mug of water and chunk of stale bread), he 'went to work", taking the exact number of steps he judged necessa ry to cover the distance from his house to his place of emp loyment Then he "taught" his students for several hours, solving mathematical problems, explaining new themes in physics or joining in a debate on some current political issue He wrote the mathematical problems and formulas on the floor, using a piece of plaster he knocked off the wall

His "classes" with the students over, Erani "went home" And so day after day This regular physical and mental exer cise did Erani good he was always cheerful and energetic

Dr Erani spent eighteen months in prison Torture and maltreatment left their bloody scars on his body, but his spirit was not undermined His example heartened his fellow prisoners

For all of eighteen months those in power delayed proceed ings against Dr Erani and his comrades for fear that the trial would boomerang against themselves

In protest against their scandalous treatment by the pri son authorities, the political prisoners declared a hunger strike, in which they were soon joined by the other Qasr inmates Their warders tried to undermine the prisoners' solidarity by the usual police method of "the whip and the lollypop", and so end the hunger strike When nothing came of that, they resorted to force Ten prisoners among them Dr Erani, were chosen as victims and whipped as they stood, helplessly bound their hands and feet heavily shackled Each prisoner received between 200 and 300 blows

The trial of Dr Erani and his comrades opened in Novem ber 1938 It was in effect a closed trial, with plain clothes men and government officials ensconced on orders from above in all the seats for the 'public"

Dr Erani refused defence counsel He took the defence of

his comrades, his own person and the Party to which he had consecrated his life upon himself He knew that he and he alone could uphold the ideas the great revolutionary teachings of Marxism Leninism

Speaking in their defence for five hours, he amazed his hearers by his logic his revolutionary integrity and his ar dour

He began by saying that he was speaking on behalf of the oppressed Iranian people He then proceeded, with inexorable logic, to prove that the Communist Party of Iran was the only true champion and voice of the people's interests He exposed the reactionary essence of the existing laws of the land He revealed the nature of justice in class society from the Marxist standpoint and cited many examples showing that the laws of bourgeois society always benefit the exploiting minority and are hostile to the exploited majority From this he concluded that it was perfectly legitimate to oppose such unjust reactionary laws Here at his trial, he laid down the unforgettable maxim that the only inviolable law is that which protects the interests of the wide masses

Elaborating his views on the class nature of justice and the courts, Dr Erani said there could be just laws only in a socialist society free from antagonistic classes He pointed out that the anti communist law of 1931 promoted the interests of an exploiting minority, a handful of plunderers of the Iranian people The interests of the majority of the Iranian people were being sacrificed to a small ruling class minority As an elective body, it behooved the Majlis to champion the interests of the great majority of the nation Instead, the 8th convocation of the Majlis which had ratified the law of 1931 catered for the interests of the minority, and therefore was reactionary

Dr Erani stigmatised the organs of justice as instruments of the ruling classes Refuting the false claims of the prosecution, he showed that in Iran those organs, as the courts, were entirely subservient to the government and the police

Far from upholding legality, they themselves violated the existing laws and were party to the government's crimes

Having nailed the ruling circles of Iran and their despotic police regime to the pillory of shame, Dr Erani went on to defend his comrades, whom the government was trying to qualify as a "group of conspirators" He described them as true sons of their people and patriots who wanted nothing but the happiness and well being of their countrymen Their activity was aimed at achieving freedom for the Iranian people and independence and prosperity for the country

Dr Erani concluded his speech by expressing his belief in the advent of the day when his people would break the chains of their bondage and see the sun of freedom and happiness shine over Iran The trial of the Iranian Communists lasted more than two weeks Its only bright spot was Taqi Erani's speech, in which he in effect indicted and passed severe sentence on the despotic regime of plunder and violence that prevailed in his country

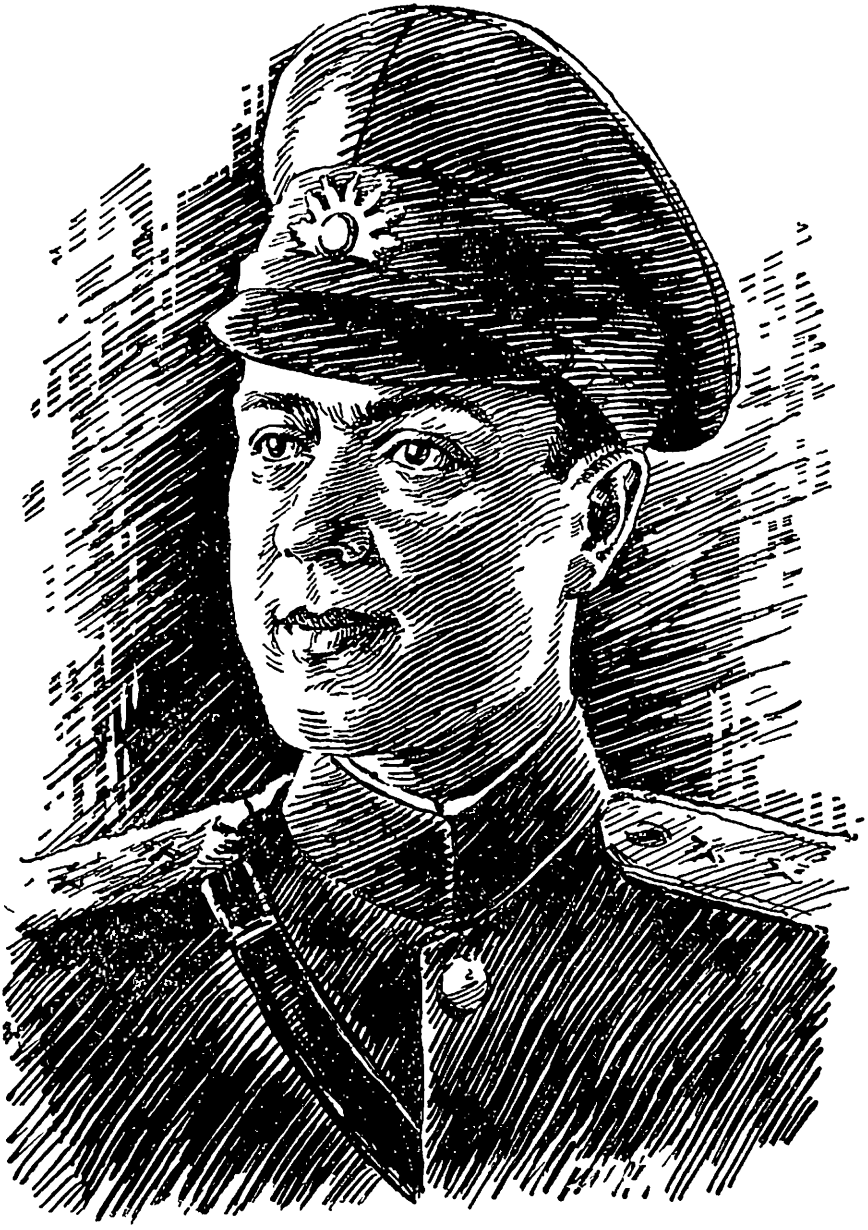
He was sentenced to ten years in prison

The unbending staunchness and unconquerable revolutionary spirit of Taqi Erani infuriated the hangmen They hatched a diabolical plan to finish him off After the trial he was put in a cell just vacated by a prisoner down with typhus His resistance was already low, and he soon contracted a severe form of the disease Given good treatment and care he might have recovered But that did not enter into the plan

On February 4, 1940, Dr Erani passed away at the age of thirty eight

The Iranian reactionaries thought that by killing Dr Erani they could kill the ideas of communism for which he had fought all his life They were grossly mistaken The cause to which Dr Erani gave his life is being advanced by the People's Party of Iran, heir to the glorious traditions of the Communist Party of Iran

The Iranian people cherish the memory of their true son Dr Erani—scholar and soldier of the revolution



Khosrov Rouzbeh

Khosrov Rouzbeh

Believe us o hero in life as in death
Your brothers in struggle have vowed in one breath
To punish your foes for their dastardly crimes
And work that our land may yet see better times

(From The Hero
a poem to Khosrov Rouzbeh by Jale)

t is hard to die in any event, and doubly so for a man of ideals whose heart is filled with hopes for a better, brighter future But it is degrading to clutch at life at all costs, in his journey through life a man must never lose sight of his goal If life must be purchased at the shameful and disgraceful price of the loss of his honour, ideals, cherished dreams and political and social convictions, it is a hundred times nobler to die "

What anguish, and yet what magnificent faith in the radiant future ring in these simple words! He who spoke them, the Iranian Communist Khosrov Rouzbeh, was a man of ex traordinary courage and will He was four years dead before his words reached the world from the gloomy Qyzyl Qal'eh prison in Teheran

Who was Khosrov Rouzbeh and what was his crime? Why was he executed?

Khosrov Rouzbeh was one of the most striking person alities in the Iranian revolutionary movement He was born

on April 15, 1915, into a family of average circumstances His father, Hossein Rouzbeh, served as a divisional commissary officer and later as the chief of the gendarmerie in Salas township, Malayer District until illness obliged him to retire from the army After that he held only a modest provincial post Life did not pamper Khosrov Rouzbeh, he was brought face to face with poverty at an early age By the time he entered secondary school, his parents' circumstances were greatly reduced To make things easier for them, Khosrov studied very hard and graduated with honours two years ahead of his class At secondary school he revealed an aptitude for mathematics that determined his subsequent course he matriculated in the technical department of the University of Teheran and majored in mathematics

At secondary school, Khosrov had written a paper entitled "Solving Equations of the Fourth and Higher Degrees by the Consecutive Division of a Series of Numbers" Now at the University he rewrote the paper, adding tables of graphic solutions and calculations and improving generally on the work Later he wrote "Theoretical Foundations of the Solution of Geometrical Problems" Had he continued at the University, he might well have become a prominent scientist But his family's material straits made him give up his university course and transfer to the Military Academy where he could study free of charge

Even as a youth, he had a distaste for the way of life he saw around him Later on, when he was brought to trial, he declared in the courtroom that such a way of life could hardly engender anything but a critical attitude towards the essence of capitalism, which is the root of all the ills and misfortunes of modern society, could hardly engender anything but dissatisfaction with capitalism That attitude grew on him as time passed and brought him eventually into the camp of active fighters against capitalism

At the Military Academy he was enrolled in the artillery department where he pursued his mathematical studies

Recalling his Academy days Rouzbeh said "When our teacher, Divisional General Zanganeh, could not resolve a difficulty that troubled the students in our theoretical studies of artillery (ballistics, carriage systems, projectiles, etc) he would turn to me and say jokingly, 'Well, doctor, let's see how you explain it '" And Khosrov would reply easily and brilliantly

In 1937, Khosrov Rouzbeh graduated from the Military Academy in the rank of lieutenant, and began to serve with an anti aircraft artillery regiment But a mind as keen and searching as his could not be idle, he engrossed himself in the study of the theoretical foundations of the electrical and optical systems of anti aircraft artillery, and made considerable headway in that field One of the results of that study was the paper "Theoretical Principles of the Optical Systems of Antiaircraft Artillery He also constructed a device for calculating firing data and drew up a fire range table for saving time during battle He devised his own system of training in firing at moving targets from light artillery pieces, and also wrote a book on the subject, entitled *Theoretical Principles of Firing Light Artillery Pieces at Moving Targets* His system completely eliminated the necessity of using planes to draw targets In addition he suggested calculations for different types of infantry weapons

His outstanding ability in mathematics and artillery and his books brought him to the notice of the Command He was promoted to the rank of senior lieutenant and offered a teaching post in the artillery department of the Academy Not long afterwards, he was made a captain His gifts as a teacher and scholar were brilliantly proved at the Academy He wrote a two volume *Course in Higher Mathematics for the Artillery Department* and books on internal ballistics, external ballistics, gun carriage systems, coastal gun fire, and other subjects Hundreds of artillery officers attended his course at the Academy and used his books All this made him a very popular figure among the young officers

Khosrov Rouzbeh was a man of unusual versatility and wide interests Besides higher mathematics and artillery theory he delved into literature and philosophy chess theory and foreign languages, economics and aesthetics He wrote a *Short History of the Second World War*, and *The War in Korea*, in fiction his works are *Games of Love and Death*, *The Girl Sumiko of Hiroshima The Wilted Buds*, *Rose France*, *The Village of Lajuj* and also the children's textbooks *Comrades* and *Children at Home and at School* A chess fan, he wrote *Chess*, *A Self Instructor for Chess Players*, *The Art of Playing Chess*, *How Not To Play Chess*, and *A Complete New Encyclopedia of Chess (Endspiel)* He did translations, interested himself in mechanics, thermodynamics, higher mathematics, physics, geometry and astronomy He tran slated educational aids on graphostatics, analytical geometry descriptive geometry, cinematic geometry, geometrical optics physical optics, the resistance of materials, theoretical mechanics, thermodynamics, astronomy and cosmogony He also translated a guide book to Russian from the French, adapting it to the Persian language

He was a great book lover, and spent much of his earnings on the acquisition of his fine library, which numbered about three thousand volumes The walls of the little room he rented in Teheran were lined with bookshelves containing books on mathematics, physics, mechanics, history and philosophy in many languages

Gradually he began to reap the benefits of his educa tion and his experience in the army Had he remained in the army, he might have risen to a position of high rank and honour held important posts and enjoyed a life of comfort and ease But that was not what he wanted "How could I yield to the temptation of a comfortable life and rosy fu ture and forget my harsh and degrading past?" he said at his trial "How could I forget the thousands of Rouzbehs whose position was even more difficult, and who had no hope of improving it? How could I forget the looks of contempt peo

ple of so called aristocratic origin had cast my way because I was poor, looks that pierced my heart like knives? How could I forget all that and go chasing the life of plenty that beckoned to me?

"Supposing even that I did so—what right had I to repay fate for my comfortable life by remaining silent and letting all the other Rouzbehs be treated with the contempt I had once been shown? I had no right to, I could not act that way The truth is that personal considerations have not shaped my beliefs Far from it My outlook is much too broad for that "

On the one hand Rouzbeh saw the abject poverty, the misery and suffering of millions of his countrymen, on the other—the wealth and luxury in which the capitalists and landowners wallowed 'Even a superficial acquaintance with the state of contemporary Iranian society and comparison of the life of different classes are bound to evoke horror, commiseration, pity", he said in the courtroom "A vast gulf exists between the propertied classes and the needy, and that gulf is widening all the time It is so vast that no thinking person can fail to see it or give serious thought to its causes "

As we read these remarkable words, there rises in the mind's eye a picture of Khosrov Rouzbeh gazing about him and pondering the fate of his people A man, honest and sensitive as he, loving his people as he did, himself having shared their hardships, could not regard the life around him with indifference

Khosrov Rouzbeh was still a young man when he took pause to re assess the spiritual and material values of life During the period when his philosophy was taking shape, Iran was in the midst of a revolutionary upsurge For the first time in the country's history, thousands of people were pouring out into the streets in many cities to take part in stormy meetings Trade unions and political parties were being formed, among them, the People s (Judeh) Party of

Iran Rouzbeh joined that party in 1943 "When I read the articles in the newspapers and other publications of the Party," he later recalled, "I felt that it was just the organisation for me, that it could help me to actively express what I had long been thinking "

From then on Khosrov Rouzbeh diligently studied the classics of Marxism Leninism, and became an ardent propagandist of Marxist Leninist ideas "I was no longer a person desiring to serve society merely by his books researches and translations," he said "Everything had changed in and for me The turbulent times commanded my energies and feelings I abandoned the idea of serving society in little ways, and decided to dedicate all my efforts to the goal of radically changing conditions and improving the unfortunate lot of millions of my countrymen "

It was a difficult road to take Not many could pursue it to the end as Rouzbeh did Some stopped half way and turned from it, the fellow travellers and careerists But Rouzbeh was not of their kind He said that "to stop half way and shun the struggle is unworthy of a true man" He ridiculed such people when during his trial he quoted the following lines from the poet Saadi's monologue of *The Candle to the Moth*

To love I fear is much too much
For one as frail as you
You run you shun my burning touch—
I fan the flame of my desire
You only let it singe your wings—
While I m consumed with love s hot fire
To love is to ignore the stings
And stones of dire adversity,
To seek as one did seek whose fame
Will rest on truth for Saadi
To love is to transcend false art
Who dreads the heat, avoid the flame!
But better—give it all your heart!

And Khosrov Rouzbeh plunged boldly into the heat of battle and gave it all his heart He was the first Iranian officer to join the People's Party of Iran Active in poli

tics, he carried on important propaganda in the army His acquaintance with Colonel Ezzatollah Siamak one of the few brilliant representatives of the older generation of Iranian Communists and veteran of the communist movement of Iran (who soon recognised in Rouzbeh a gifted colleague), helped the young patriot to orientate himself correctly in Marxist Leninist theory and to make him the man he eventually became

With Siamak and other honest officers of the Iranian army who were his fellow Party members, he founded the Organisation of Freedom loving Officers of Iran and was subsequently elected a member of its Central Committee

Explaining the purpose of the Organisation, Rouzbeh said that "It aimed to take the forces of law and order out of the hands of the ruling classes, and make them serve the majority of the people, that is to say, the unfortunate, the oppressed, those who went about in homespun blouses and cheap fezzes All our efforts were directed at establishing a national government, achieving genuine popular rule and upholding the sovereign rights of the people in the name of freedom and human dignity, for the honour and independence of our beloved homeland "

The finest and most patriotic officers, men of recognised integrity and knowledgeability, affiliated themselves with the Organisation

In 1945, the reaction raised its head in Iran, and the General Staff struck out mercilessly at the progressive officers Several members of the Organisation were arrested and banished, many went into hiding Khosrov Rouzbeh had to go underground

Fearlessly and with selfless devotion he continued to direct the activities of the Organisation and to win more members for it He was a brilliant publicist and wrote many articles denouncing conditions in the army Of his many books exposing the lamentable pass to which the army had been brought, the best known was his *Blind Obedience* His

books were read by his fellow officers and made a deep impression on them Under their influence many young patriotic officers aligned themselves with the democratic movement

Three times the authorities arrested Khosrov Rouzbeh, and three times he broke out of prison and resumed his duties After every such breakaway, he redoubled his efforts to invigorate the activity of the Officers' Organisation

His escape from the Qasr Prison on the afternoon of December 15, 1950, was particularly spectacular That day, ten Party leaders serving long terms were driven out of the prison courtyard in a lorry in broad daylight One of the ten was Khosrov Rouzbeh It was a boldly conceived and executed prison break

Police sleuths wore themselves out trying to find the runaway, but without success The bourgeois press spread the tale that Rouzbeh had fled the country But he was in Iran, continuing his revolutionary work

Hard times now began for the Party The reaction was baring its fangs Renegades bent on splitting and dissolving the Organisation harassed the best known Party leaders Opportunists and careerists of every hue deserted the ranks, some to go over to the camp of the reaction, others to escape the persecution and hounding to which the People's Party of Iran was being subjected And there were those who lost courage in prison and took the road of treachery It was in fact the treason of a few unstable Party members that brought about the disruption of the Organisation of Freedom-loving Officers of Iran

Wholesale arrests of members of the Organisation of Freedom loving Officers of Iran started in the latter half of August 1954 Some of the best, the most highly educated and sterling officers of the army, police and gendarmerie were taken into custody The Iranian press reported that all the leaders of the Organisation, including Colonel Ez-

zatollah Hoseyin Siamak and Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Ali Abbas Mobasheri, were arrested The only one who managed to elude his pursuers was Khosrov Rouzbeh

His fellow officers bore themselves with remarkable fortitude during their trial, and died like heroes Never will the Iranian people forget the names of Colonel Siamak, Lt Colonel Mobasheri, Major Vakili, Major Vaziriyan and their comrades, who endured horrible tortures but chose to die as honest men rather than become traitors The authorities resorted to every means to make the veteran revolutionary and ardent Iranian patriot Colonel Siamak betray the cause and declare himself a Soviet spy Such an admission on his part would have been grist to the mill of the government and the international reaction itching to start another anti-Soviet campaign But Siamak got up smilingly in the courtroom to say with scathing irony and contempt "Quite right Every morning I prepared full reports on the gendarmerie for a certain foreign officer But he was not a Russian He was an intelligence officer of the U S State Department who in the guise of an adviser directed the Iranian gendar merie "

The unexampled heroism of these men is reflected in the following

Captain Marzban wrote on the wall of his prison cell "This is the last night of my life I have no qualms I hope all the political prisoners feel as I do "

"Mokhtari is ready to die," wrote another prisoner on his cell wall "Greetings to my fellow political pri soners!"

The messages of the sentenced men to their relatives and friends were not made known to the world until after their execution One hour before his sentence was put into effect, Major Rahim Behzad wrote "In an hour Mokhtari, Nasiri, Marzban, Mohaqqeq, Sarushiyan and I will be shot May the Iranian people win their fight! In these last moments before my death, I am thinking of the Iranian people and my dear

Party, my beloved wife, and my fate, which is so like the fate of Kave * I am proud to be sentenced and shot for the sake of the Iranian people " Lt Colonel Mobasheri wrote a letter to his wife the night before he was executed, saying "At 3 o'clock in the morning my comrades and I were told that our death sentences are to be put into effect All I ask is for you to be calm and strong Always remember that your husband was an honest man who desired nothing but the happiness of our beloved people and for that paid with his life Such a death is a noble death Tell my children, when they grow up, that their father was executed for the happiness of the Iranian people "

Colonel Siamak wrote in his letter to his family "The truth—and you must know it—is that I did not betray my country and was neither a traitor nor a spy Be proud that I died seeking a great goal which is the transformation of our homeland and the happiness of our people " What rare spiritual strength and warmth, what optimism and faith in the triumph of the just cause for which the members of the Officers' Organisation fought and gave their lives breathe in these lines!

Before his execution, Siamak joked "This is the last meeting of our committee " When their executioners wanted to blindfold the officers before firing, they objected Major Vaziriyan said "Don't blindfold me I want to die with my eyes open and see the enemy's hands tremble at my death " As Major Vakili's feet were being bound he said "Tie my feet to the post as tight as you wish, but leave my hands and body free, that I may bow to my beloved people after I am shot "

Only men moved by great ideals are capable of the kind of courage and heroism these Iranian Communists showed in the face of death

Their exploits, the good they did their people will con

* Kave, a legendary Iranian hero, a blacksmith who sacrificed his life for the happiness of the people

Colonel Siamak defending himself before the military tribunal

tinue to inspire thousands of Iranian patriots to fight against imperialism and reaction.

Meanwhile the search for Khosrov Rouzbeh went on. And then he too was betrayed into the hands of the authorities. At nine o'clock in the evening of July 6, 1957, he was identified by a turncoat on a street in Teheran and surrounded by a gang of armed agents of the Iranian secret police. The heroism and sang-froid with which he fought them off border on the incredible. After receiving three severe bullet wounds—one in his left elbow, a second in the left hip and a third in the stomach, causing internal hemorrhage—he found the strength to climb a ladder to a house roof, write the traitor's name on the pages of his notebook, sign the pages and throw them about, that the people might know

who had betrayed him His strength gone, he was seized and thrown into a solitary cell in the Qyzyl Qal'eh prison where he remained for nine months under the most appalling conditions

"The cell where I am kept," he related, "looks like a neglected chamber in an old bath house It has only one door which leads into another cell, the second cell is connected by a door with an inner corridor I am absolutely sure that in all the eighty years since this building was erected it has not been properly aired, and the same fetid closeness breathed by one prisoner after another is now poisoning my lungs Be that as it may, I shall endure my ordeal with honour, for did not Saadi say

> "If you are burned, do not call for help
> When like the moth you reach for the flame

Rouzbeh was not allowed to receive visits from relatives and friends or to write to them The only books he was permitted to read were a collection of Saadi's poems, the lyrics of Hafiz, and Firdausi's *Shah Nama*—and even these he did not get until the last few months of his incarceration

He was tried in camera, and not in a courthouse as the law required, in a prison office which held many bitter memories for him He was denied the right of choosing a lawyer and the time allotted by law to acquaint himself with the indictment and prepare his defence Not even pressmen were admitted to the trial

By depriving him of his lawful rights, the authorities wanted to sap his faith in the workings of justice

They were out to intimidate Rouzbeh at this secret trial where all accepted court procedure was ignored It was obviously their intention to try him like an ordinary criminal But his staunchness and bravery upset the plans of the Iranian reaction He took his defence into his own hands, and coped brilliantly with it He said at the trial

"I hate capitalism, which causes all the misfortunes of humanity, and among them the misfortunes which beset the Iranian people

"I hate capitalism from the bottom of my heart, and am an irreconcilable enemy of the system which gives all the good things of life to a thousand privileged families at the cost of the misery, hunger, poverty and deprivation of eighteen million Iranians

"I am opposed to capitalism because, in addition to the countless other hardships it brings in its train, it has made immeasurable inroads on the independence and integrity of my country and the liberty and well being of its citizens My hatred for capitalism does not mean that I am against national sovereignty On the contrary, I have fought capitalism in order to uphold and strengthen our national sovereignty

'We want to put an end forever to the exploitation of man by man, which is the source of all social ills We want the means of production to belong to all—the peasants to cultivate and sow the fields that belong to society, in other words, to them, and the workers to labour in factories that likewise belong to them "

Rouzbeh was a bitter opponent of the monarchy He did not conceal the fact and declared in all hearing at his trial 'I have always been opposed to monarchistic principles and consider them incompatible with the development of contemporary society in Iran I am convinced that under modern conditions, the republican system is preferable for Iran "

In his scathing speech he not only denied the charges brought against him, but convincingly demonstrated that the regime obtaining in Iran was unconstitutional and that Iran did not have a constitutional government "If we had such a government," he said, "elections would have to take place in an atmosphere of complete freedom, and our deputies to Parliament would be true spokesmen of the people But

he truth is that in fifty years of constitutional government in Iran we have had no parliaments (with the exception of one or two convocations) which expressed the will of the Iranian people, factually, therefore, we have not had a constitutional government the Iranian people have never had either the occasion or the opportunity to freely exercise their right of franchise "

Rouzbeh then proceeded, on the basis of concrete examples, to expose the electoral farce in Iran and the real nature of the Iranian parliament, made up of hand picked representatives of the propertied classes posing as spokesmen of the people He spoke eloquently of the disfranchised position of women, who comprise half of the country's population, and drew a damning picture of the flagrant violation of the constitution's guarantees of inviolability of the individual and personal property He denounced the use of the army by the ruling hierarchy to implement its anti-popular course He showed that such constitutional guarantees as the right of assembly and organisation had been trampled upon and were as good as null and void, that the people's sovereign rights, their right to active control of the affairs of the state, had been abrogated He likened the Iranian constitution to a lion without a mane or tail—in short, a travesty of a constitution "How can a man be accused of violating the principles of a constitution which does not exist?" he asked

Khosrov Rouzbeh had boundless faith in the complete victory of socialist ideals He laid his ideas calmly and fearlessly before his judges, as is seen in the following excerpts from his speech at the trial

"Capitalism's champions have sacrificed their honour and good name in order to defend the foundations of capitalist society Socialism's champions are honoured and privileged to be able to defend and uphold the foundations of the socialist system

"At my heart's bidding I chose to go along with the Peo-

ple's Party of Iran, obeying the flame that burns in my breast and commands me to serve the Iranian people I confess that with every fibre of my being I hold its command sacred All of me belongs to my Party, I am in love with socialism, sincerely and devoutly in love with it I may not live to see the triumph of socialism in Iran with my own eyes, but I know for a fact that times will change and capitalism will be eradicated

" If I am in love with and dedicated to socialism it is because I feel, I know, I am convinced that its principles are superior to those of any other social system In everything I did I was guided by precisely those principles, by the desire to help create a new Iranian society which will bring with it happiness and well being for my beloved peo ple and uphold their dignity, honour and freedom "

Rouzbeh's trial became a duel of ideas, and he was the victor

During both his interrogation and the trial, Khosrov Rouzbeh bore himself like an experienced underground worker who deliberately sought to confound the prosecution and keep any information about the activity of the People's Party of Iran from falling into its hands At the time of his arrest, there were already some members of the Central Committee of the People's Party in prison, among them Dr Yazdi, Dr Bahrami, Amanollah Qoreyshi and Sharmini Bahrami was a Secretary of the Central Committee In the course of their examinations they stooped to betrayal and slander in order to save their skins

It was left to Khosrov Rouzbeh to defend the Party He said

"The People's Party of Iran—and this is the opinion of its enemies as well as its friends—is a very great party, it is the most high-principled and best organised party we have had in all the fifty years of constitutional government in Iran Its most important and distinctive feature is that it is a revolutionary party It is a party called into being

by historical necessity It is founded on scientific principles and is guided by scientific theory and a scientific world out look It prides itself on the fact that it rests on the forces of the people and fights for the rights of the people And since the forces of the people are inexhaustible and indestructible so the People s Party of Iran is indestructible and cannot be prevented from fulfilling its historical mis sion "

Khosrov Rouzbeh then went on to speak, with charac teristic courage and optimism, of the day when "the storms will subside, and the truth prevail For Iranian society, too, the day will come when it is able to discuss these problems freely and express its opinion That day is not far off "

Of those who had turned traitor in prison, Rouzbeh said "Everything that Dr Bahrami states in his disgusting letters is an unspeakable lie " He told the court "It was not fitting for persons like Dr Yazdi, engineer Sharmini and Amanollah Qoreyshi, who were among the most influential and authoritative members of the People's Party of Iran, to succumb to such weakness, fear and hypocrisy The con duct of those persons, for they do not deserve to be called comrades, is obnoxious and can only meet with our censure and disapproval All one can say of them is that they are liars, despicable creatures, deceivers and charlatans, and nothing more " Khosrov Rouzbeh quoted Saadi's "The great of spirit do not tremble for their lives "

Far from being great of spirit, Yazdi, Bahrami, Sharmini and Qoreyshi, traitors to the interests of the Iranian people, were lacking even in ordinary human integrity As soon as the persecutions began, they repudiated the Party and the ideas they had paid lip service to in the better days when the Party legally gained its great popularity among the masses

One cannot help marvelling at the great spiritual strength and purity of men like Khosrov Rouzbeh, who put the cause

for which they fought above all else and held their political ideals to be sacred "I stand firmly by my ideological principles," Rouzbeh said, 'and nothing can turn me from them My political convictions are sacred to me I will not fail my vow, my duty I respect the signature I put to my membership card in the People's Party of Iran, and will never stoop to treachery in order to further my personal interests or avoid danger

" If a vow to be true I have taken
And that vow have forsaken—
What ideal can I find to console me
Or restore my soul s dignity? "

"If I am told I will go to heaven as a reward for having broken my vow, I shall refuse, for even there I will not know peace "

So spoke the indomitable Iranian Communist Khosrov Rouzbeh, first of the arrested leaders of the People's Party of Iran to come fearlessly to its defence "I am proud to have performed my historical mission," he said "In spite of all the perils that have stalked my steps, I remained in Iran to finish the work that men like Yazdi, Bahrami, Qoreyshi and Sharmini have betrayed I did not desert the trenches during battle, and can now answer honourably for all my deeds "

Khosrov Rouzbeh loved life and its beauty He loved his people and did all in his power to improve their lot He lived in the hope of a better future for them and believed that their future would be better But he was not ready to pay for life with treachery

Rouzbeh was tried behind the closed doors of a prison office, yet it seemed as though the Iranian people were present at his trial and he was speaking to them He did not care what the judges thought He knew they were following the orders of the class they served His speech was not addressed to them It was addressed to the people he loved and for whose

happiness he had fought He was confident that his words would pierce the prison walls and reach the people

"I am proud to have spoken here as I have," he concluded 'If the senators use their powers to put my death sentence into effect, nothing serious will happen The sky will not tumble down Khosrov Rouzbeh will be shot But his ideas will be properly appraised, and that will make him immortal "

Those flaming words tore through the gloomy walls of the Qyzyl Qal'eh prison in Teheran and lighted up the Iranian people's struggle for the radiant future of which Rouzbeh dreamed He was not afraid to die, the only thing this man of crystal conscience feared was that, were he not to be executed, simple people might suspect him, Khosrov Rouzbeh of being no better than Bahrami or Yazdi and, like them, of having betrayed the Party and the people That is why he declared in the courtroom "I want to die as the founder of the officers' Organisation "

He labelled his trial and that of the officers who had been executed before him illegal "Neither I nor the officers and others who were sentenced for their political activity are criminals, on the contrary, we have faithfully served our beloved country The just and honest Iranian people regard the sentences passed on us as despotic, and will exonerate us, their martyrs You can condemn Khosrov Rouzbeh, but you cannot condemn humanity, honesty, patriotism, selfless dedication to the people As soon as you pronounce sentence on me, I will get up with a smile on my lips and a firm heart, and thank the esteemed judges "

On May 11, 1958, the news seeped out that at the break of that day the prominent Iranian Communist Khosrov Rouzbeh had been shot at the Heshmatiyeh firing grounds in Teheran On his last day, as all through his trial, Rouzbeh bore himself, like many of his fellow officers, with extraordinary courage, and died heroically with head on high The day Rouzbeh was shot the well known bourgeois newspaper

Ettelaat wrote "When he was asked to perform the usual religious rites before death, Khosrov Rouzbeh again declared, as he had repeatedly declared during the examination of the case, that he did not require such rites and was not a believer '

So expired a great son of the Iranian people Despite the harsh realities of his country, Khosrov Rouzbeh rose to heights that place him among the foremost fighters for com munism of our times

His immortal exploit will help to mould the views of coming generations of Iranians

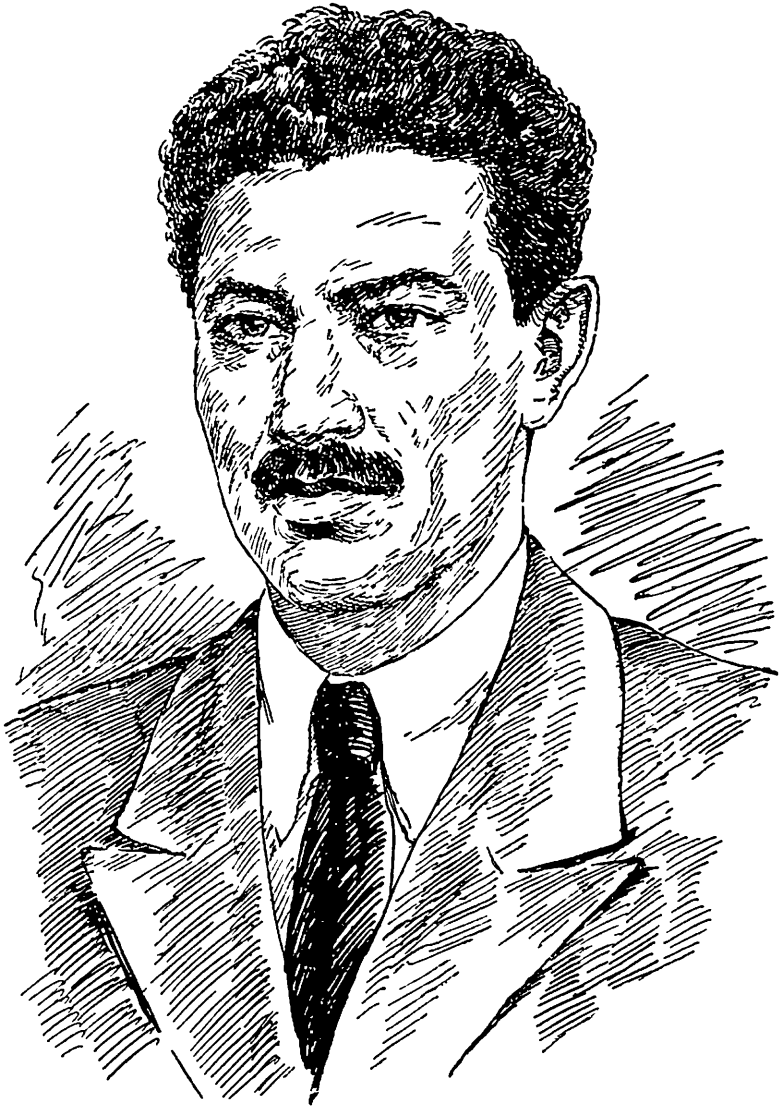
Khosrov Rouzbeh never visited the Soviet Union, but he followed developments in the U S S R with keen interest, knew a great deal about the country, and did all he could to tell the Iranian people the truth about it He wrote a book called *The Land of Soviets and How It is Governed* He interested himself in Soviet scientific advances, took pride in them, and in speaking of the advantages of the socialist system over capitalism, said at his trial

"It is no accident that Russia, a backward country in the past, which began building itself up practically from scratch, has in the space of forty years become one of the most progressive and advanced states Thanks to the maximum utilisation of the talents of its people and implementation of universal education, it was able, many months before the fourteen-kilogram American satellite 'Explorer', to launch a five hundred kilogram sputnik and put it into orbit around the globe, and to send a cosmic rocket close to the moon These scientific achievements testify to the superiority of the socialist economic system over the capitalist system It is my opinion that the Soviets or the very socialist sys tem, being essentially the opposite of capitalism, have never pursued colonialistic aims with respect to Iran in the past or the present, in fact, at times of need the Soviet Union has given the Iranian people substantial assistance "

His supreme dedication to the cause of socialism, his

selfless service to his country, for which Khosrov Rouzbe gave his life, will be remembered by the people even aft many years separate the harvesting of the crop from th sowing of the seed

The Iranian people, inspired by the example of suc outstanding countrymen as Khosrov Rouzbeh, will carve road to the radiant future and sweep aside all the barrier that block the way



Fahıd

Fahid

Not far from the centre of Baghdad, opposite the Central Political Prison and one minute s walk from Harun ar Rashid Street, is the Martyrs' Cemetery

In the winter of 1950 these words were cut on one of the white marble headstones

"I died a Communist Communism is stronger than death!"

The inscription continues 'Yussuf Suleiman Yussuf (Fahid), Iraqi working class leader, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Iraq, martyr of the national struggle against imperialism Executed by the imperialist hangmen in Iraq on February 1949 after a fraudulent trial

He went to the gallows believing in the justice of the cause espoused by our people and all mankind confident of their victory "

These are words that plough the soul, they call to mind the heroism of Musa Djalil, Julius Fuçik, Gabriel Peri and the Young Guards, their exploit and staunchness in the face of death

Yussuf Suleiman's life and work were indivisibly bound up with the activities of the Iraqi Communist Party It is not the purpose of this chapter to review the history of the

Communist Party or analyse and appraise individual Party documents and decisions We propose to acquaint the reader only with those facts and historical events that have direct bearing on the life of Yussuf Suleiman and shed light on the situation in Iraq during that period

Iraqi Communists' First Steps

Yussuf Suleiman was born in Baghdad in 1904 His parents were comfortably situated, if not rich His father was much concerned to give all his children an education Yussuf finished grammar school in Baghdad But his father died, and Yussuf could not go to high school Instead he began to work

That happened in 1917, the year of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and of the expulsion of the Turkish colonialists from Iraq by the British

On entering Baghdad, General Maude, the commander in-chief of the British Army, declared We have come as liberators, not conquerors " But the Iraqis soon learned to their sorrow that his words were cheap demagogy The British colonialists proceeded shamelessly to turn Iraq into their colony Their colonial domination of the country was clothed in the trappings of a mandate received from the League of Nations in June 1920

The news that Britain had been given a mandate over Iraq sparked off an explosion of nationwide discontent That very year an armed uprising flared up Its outbreak was undoubtedly influenced by the victory of the young Soviet state over the interventionists and the upswing of the national liberation movement in the neighbouring Arab countries of Syria and Egypt

The British invaders had to evacuate several towns The insurgents approached Baghdad The colonialists brought in reinforcements, and by the end of 1920 had drowned the uprising in blood King Faisal was crowned with the help of

British arms A constitutional monarchy was established in Iraq which retained the status of a British mandate territory until 1932

Yussuf Suleiman began to take an active part in his people s struggle for liberation when he was quite a young man In 1927, he and Husny Ayyash a fellow dock worker at the Basra port organised a small Marxist study group The youths who joined it studied the *Communist Manifesto*, Lenin's books *What Is To Be Done?* and *The State and Revolution*, as well as articles on the nationalities question

The colonialists had closed the borders of Iraq to the entry of books about the Soviet Union and other revolutionary literature With the exception of Lenin s *The State and Revolution*, which had been translated and printed in the early twenties under the title of *Lenin's Memoirs* no Marxist works were available in Arabic at the time But Marxist books in English were brought in illegally from Europe and the Lebanon for Yussuf Suleiman's group by seamen

In 1930, mass action against British rule shook Iraq It was brought on by the treaty Britain was forcing on Iraq to tighten her grip on the country In exchange, the Iraqi feudal lords, tribal sheikhs and big compradores were to be given wider powers in the government of the country

In protest against this conspiracy the patriotic organisations of Iraq urged the masses to pour out on the streets no less than 100 000 people participated in the demonstrations in Baghdad alone In Basra the disturbances went on for three days The dock workers the most organised and numerous section of the Basra working class, made a very staunch stand Premier Nuri es Said called out the troops The streets and docks ran with blood Many of the workers who participated in the struggle landed in jail Friends helped Yussuf Suleiman to evade the clutches of the police, but his

comrade Husny Ayyash was seized by the gendarmes and shortly afterwards sentenced to death and executed

The growth of the working class, emergence of trade unions and public organisations, and intensification of the liberation and class struggles created favourable conditions for the founding of the Communist Party of Iraq The need for the establishment of the Party was manifest in a number of cities

The first person to get down to the practical task of its organisation was Yussuf Suleiman He left Basra and went to the town of Nasireya, centre of a large agricultural area on the lower Euphrates By then he was a competent and experienced underground worker, a man of broad outlook, and, from the testimony of people who knew him at the time, a convinced Marxist Iraq's first communist unit led by Yussuf Suleiman thus appeared in 1932 in Nasireya It was a small unit consisting of a few workers, schoolteachers clerks and students who called themselves Communists They were the first Communists in Iraq

A year later similar units appeared in Baghdad and Basra In March 1934, representatives of all the Communist groups and units in the country held a meeting to discuss united action From that meeting came the decision to form the Communist Party of Iraq It also elected a Central Committee, known as the Committee for Struggle Against Imperialism and Exploitation And so 1934 has gone down in the history of Iraq as the year of the establishment of the Communist Party

At this meeting, the founders of the Party put out a leaflet setting forth the political platform and rules of the Party, which were thus brought to the attention of the people Yussuf Suleiman, the professional revolutionary known in the Party by the pseudonym of Fahid, became a member of the first Central Committee of the Party

Twenty five years later the newspaper *Ittihad al Shaab*, in its issue of March 31, 1959, looked back with pride on the

path traversed by the Party It wrote "The Communist Party of Iraq was forged in the flames of a fierce national struggle It overcame tremendous difficulties and sustained great losses The Party has always marched in the vanguard of the national movement, for it is a revolutionary party which has never known fatigue or quiet There have been times when it was the only party to continue the struggle Often it acted jointly with other political forces But it has never laid down its arms, and has always set an example of how the people's interests should be defended "

The Party s first printed periodical, the newspaper *Kifah al Shaab* (The People's Struggle) began to come out in July 1935 Under the name of the paper, on the front page, were the words 'Organ of the Communist Party of Iraq" and two slogans Workers of Iraq, Unite!" and "Workers of the World, Unite!" It was printed illegally in an edition of no more than 500 copies Only five numbers appeared when the police discovered the printing plant and, in November of the same year, wrecked it

From the testimony of veterans of the Iraqi communist movement we know that Fahid had quite a knack for jour nalism and was highly instrumental in getting the newspa per going He also wrote several articles and reviews for it He was the Party organiser for southern Iraq at the time, and concentrated his attention on establishing communist branches in Basra, Nasireya and Divania

At the end of 1935, the Party sent Fahid abroad to study After a stay in Italy and France, he went to the Soviet Union, where he matriculated in the Communist University of the Peoples of the East He finished his course there with honours, said good bye to Moscow, and made another stop in Paris The knowledge gained in the Soviet Union, acquaint-ance with the work of the French Communist Party and with the leaders of a number of other European Communist Par-ties broadened his outlook and helped him tremendously in his practical work on returning to his homeland He

reached Iraq at the end of 1938, settled in Basra, and threw himself without delay into Party work with his usual zeal.

The position of the Iraqi Communist Party on the eve of the Second World War was grave. Brutal repression had thinned its ranks. Its organisations functioned in highly conspiratorial conditions and were often isolated from one another, as they lacked reliable contacts. The situation was further aggravated by a belief current among the Iraqi bourgeois intellectuals, youth and officers of the army that fascist Germany could deliver Iraq from British domination.

After the coup d'état of April 1941, the government was headed by Rashid Ali Gailani.

This new government had considerable support in the army. The coup was an expression of the feeling against Britain and the growth of the anti-imperialist movement in the country. But the Gailani cabinet invited the help of nazi Germany, which was counting on turning the developments in Iraq to its own benefit. In the confusion of the moment, some of the national patriotic organisations decided to back Gailani; their wavering stand with respect to the coup found an echo in the Communist Party. But such vacillation was quickly overcome, and in the statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iraq, the struggle against fascism was pointed up as the country's main task.

Britain brought its troops into action against Iraq, crushed the opposition, occupied Baghdad and put up garrisons in the large cities. On the pretext of suppressing fascism the authorities made wholesale arrests. In some cities the police disbanded the Communist Party organisations. Several members of the Central Committee were arrested.

Such was the situation when Fahid moved to Bagdad in the summer of 1941. Not long afterwards, the Central Committee elected him to its Political Bureau and he became one

of the main leaders of the Party He set about rehabilitating the disbanded organisations and consolidating the Party's ranks with his customary energy, focusing attention, as the key tasks of the moment, on the organisational strengthening of the Party and ideological defeat of the opportunists and factionalists Early in 1943 the Central Committee elected him General Secretary of the Communist Party of Iraq

Leader of the Party

The Second World War saw a marked deterioration in the conditions of the Iraqi toilers Wages did not keep up with the rise in prices

At the same time the British administration saw the need for support in Iraq and had to ease up the repression of Iraqi liberation fighters, if only a little The British government promised, on the termination of the war, to reconsider the 1930 Treaty As an ally of the Soviet Union in the war against fascist Germany, Britain could not altogether prevent true information about the Soviet Union from seeping into the Iraqi press The reports of the Soviet army's victories were joyously hailed in Iraq and strengthened the people's belief in the proximity of their emancipation from foreign oppres sion The political consciousness and activity of the people increased rapidly That explains the decision of the Iraqi government to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR The Soviet government agreed, and in 1944 the two countries exchanged ambassadors

The influx of new members into the Communist Party increased during the war, it drew into its ranks factory and white collar workers, teachers and students The prestige of the Party soared, and people began to look up to it with growing confidence

In addition to the Communist Party, there were several other groups that styled themselves Marxists or Communists

in Iraq at this time Their existence undermined the unity of the communist movement "They are trying to disrupt our Party," Fahid said in one of his articles, "to sow seeds of discord, and undermine trust in the Party s leadership "

The Party's central newspaper *Al Sharara* (The Spark) had also come under the influence of the factionalists When it proved impossible to wrest it from their control, the Central Committee instructed two of its members, Husain ash Shabibi and Zakki Basim, to launch the publication of another newspaper *Al Kaida*, as this paper was called, from the word "foundation" began to come out in 1943, and played an inestimable role in the development of the communist movement in Iraq It carried many articles by Fahid and other leaders of the Iraqi Communist Party The people soon came to love this newspaper

Many were the times the police arrested its editors and confiscated its sets of type and printing presses But each time the Communists set up the newspaper office again and resumed publication *Al Kaida* continued to come out with a few breaks until 1955, when it was replaced by the newspaper *Ittihad al Shaab* (People's Unity)

An important role in the struggle against the factionalists belongs to Fahid's article for the *Al Kaida* entitled "A Communist and not Social Democratic Party" in which he defended Lenin s principle of Party leadership and Party democracy The article dealt a rebuff to the adherents of anarchism and Social Democratic laxity, with their repudiation of the need for democratic centralism and strict Party discipline

The Central Committee's struggle, headed by Fahid, for the unity of the Iraqi communist movement was crowned with success One faction and group after another announced its dissolution or simply fell apart of itself The last disappeared in 1947

With victory ensured by and large over the factionalists and its ranks strengthened, the Communist Party of Iraq

found itself in a position to call its first National Conference This was a red letter event for the Party which had been functioning underground ever since its inception The conference was held in Baghdad in February 1944, and was attended by forty delegates representing most of the Party organisations of the country

The Central Committee's report on the domestic and international situation was delivered by Fahid "Our first Party Conference," he stated, "meets at a time when the Red Army is raining crushing blows on the nazi hordes and liberating the territory of the socialist homeland " For the embattled Iraqi people, he went on, the main thing now was to expedite the end of hostilities and achieve genuine independence for their country Without that the solution of its social and cultural problems and implementation of democratic reforms was out of the question The people could only be happy on the liberated soil of their country, on soil freed from foreign oppression

At one of the following sessions of the Conference, Fahid presented the draft of a national programme for the Communist Party of Iraq which championed the interests of the workers, peasants, handicraftsmen, national bourgeoisie and army, and demanded equal rights for the women of Iraq and all its national minorities, primarily the Kurds "We are fighting for the sovereignty of our country," said the first article of the Programme, "and want it to be independent in actual fact, not in words "

The motto of the Party Programme was "A Free Country—a Happy People!" That is still the motto of the Communists of Iraq It graces the Party's documents, newspapers, magazines and leaflets

Approximately one year after the Conference, in April 1945, the Communist Party of Iraq held its Ist Congress under the slogan "For the organisational consolidation of the Communist Party and broadening of the national movement!" The Congress adopted a Party programme and rules

Fahid opened the Congress and made the report on behalf of the Central Committee The main point of his speech was unification of the national forces of the Iraqi people in the struggle for the eradication of the semi colonial regime in the country, for the overthrow of the dictatorship, and for the attainment of democratic freedoms

"You must remember, comrades," he said addressing the delegates, "that we live in an age when a handful of financial magnates in the imperialist countries would like to force their undisguised class dictatorship on all of us Savage tyranny, as exemplified by fascism, has succeeded in launching an offen sive because of the disunity and weakness of the democratic organisations Beginning with its own countries it has en meshed the world in crime, murder destruction You must remember comrades, that this force was able to embark on the realisation of its obnoxious plans only after it had smashed all the people s organisations, especially the or-ganisations of the working class at home after it had left the working class without weapons of self defence

"You must remember that the reaction, working hand in glove with imperialism is pursuing a policy of disbanding the existing parties and crushing the people's right to set up their own organisations It has already succeeded to a considerable extent in disarraying the forces of our people "

Fahid stressed the need of a national front of all patrio tic forces, a front dedicated to the struggle for emancipation from colonial dependence, for the economic and spiritual advancement of the Iraqi people He urged the Party to rally the masses around the National Programme painting a clear picture of the further development of the country "After you finish your work here," he told the Congress dele gates, "go to your comrades and all your countrymen with the National Programme in one hand and the slogans of the Congress in the other Let them serve as greetings from the Congress to our comrades and countrymen "

The Congress completed its work several days before the capitulation of nazi Germany The news of the total defeat of fascism was the signal for a great patriotic upsurge in Iraq The Iraqis hoped that the victory over fascism, in which they too had a share, would bring them their long awaited deliv erance from foreign oppression and poverty Nuri es Said resigned from his post at the insistence of the country's de mocratic forces The new cabinet was obliged to permit the activities of several trade unions as well as the publication of a number of democratic newspapers and magazines The spring of 1946 saw the adoption of a law legalising the status of the political parties

That law did not apply to the Communist Party, but its leadership made the most of the favourable situation

Fahid held that under the existing conditions the Party could well use both legal and illegal methods of work Zaki Basim, a member of its Political Bureau, was instructed by the Central Committee to become the private founder of the Dar al Hikma Publishing Plant, which put out several pamphlets popularising Marxism Leninism and various translations from the Russian about life in the Soviet Union

Husain ash Shabibi, Muhammed Husain Abu-l Is and several other leaders of the Communist Party founded a Con stituent Council of the Party of National Liberation, and set up an official Bureau of the Council That done, they asked the Home Ministry for a permit to organise that party The Ministry turned down the request But this strategic move gave the Council several months' leeway in which to hold meetings publish Party documents, and engage in talks on cooperation with representatives of the other parties

While continuing to bring out the newspaper *Al Kaida*, the Communists also utilised the non communist periodicals Fahid wrote, under the pen name of Yasin Khalaf, for the newspaper *Al Bilad* and magazine *Al Majallat* In his artic

les "Heavy Industry Is the Foundation of Our Independence" "The Imperialist Threat to Iraq's National Economy", "The British Are Destroying Our National Industry", which appeared in these periodicals, he argued the necessity of using domestic capital to develop the national economy of the country

The skilful combination of legal and illegal methods of work did much to strengthen the ties of the Communists with the masses The Party was invigorated numerically and organisationally Its influence increased among the workers and intellectuals of central and southern Iraq Communists were elected to the leadership of a number of trade unions, among them the Railway Workers' Union, one of the largest in the country Between 1944 and 1946, Fahid made many speeches before audiences of workers, students and teachers He established contacts with bourgeois leaders, among them the heads of the People's Party and the National Union

But along with these heartening events in the domestic life of Iraq, there were others that evoked considerable anxiety The problem of the Kurds (a fifth of the population of Iraq) became extremely acute towards the end of the war The 1943 uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan, led by two brothers, the Barzan tribal sheiks Ahmed and Mustafa Barzani, highlighted the demands for Kurd autonomy within the framework of the Iraqi state and various economic improvements The Kurds liberated a substantial slice of northern Iraq and reached the town of Erbil At first the British, in their alarm at the uprising, induced the Iraqi government to conclude an agreement with its leaders But in the spring of 1945, troops were brought against the insurgents, and more than fifty of their villages were reduced to ashes The Kurds' detachments were pushed out into Iranian territory

The Communist Party of Iraq appealed to the people to make the government stop the bloodshed and grant the Kurds their democratic rights It explained that clashes between

Kurds and Arabs merely played into the hands of the imperialists and helped them to retain their stranglehold on Iraq

Fahid attached the highest importance to the solution of the problem of the Kurds In one of his articles disseminated in leaflet form, he wrote 'The colonialists have provoked the government more than once into hostilities against the Kurds in order to break up the unity of our nation We condemn the government's military campaign against the Barzani tribes and peaceful Kurdish villages, we condemn the arrests of Barzani tribesmen in the Kurd areas and demand 1) the immediate cessation of hostilities against the Barzan tribesmen and Kurd villages, 2) the lifting of the state of emergency in those areas and recall of the troops, 3) the release of all persons arrested in connection with the above events

We ask all Iraqis—Arabs, Kurds and citizens of other nationalities—to work for the satisfaction of these demands and to resist the false propaganda which is pushing our nation into the colonialists' clutches "

Fahid did much to get the publication of a Kurdish newspaper going The idea of starting such a newspaper originated in 1943 but was not realised until the beginning of 1945 Nafiya Yunes, the editor in chief of the *Azadi* or "Freedom", as the newspaper was called, has told us this about it "All the articles in the newspaper were either suggested or written by Fahid himself He worked hard to make it the real mouthpiece of the Kurds Like the *Al Kaida*, its opposite number, *Azadi* directed its main blows against imperialist and idealist ideas and helped the toilers to understand the methods and aims of the struggle There were times when the publication of *Azadi* was interrupted because of the difficult underground conditions in which it came out, of police raids and so on But after every such break, the paper reappeared Comrade Fahid continued to manage it until his arrest in January 1947 "

The problem of the Kurds was by no means the only one to which Fahid devoted his teeming energy and talent as an organiser and journalist The Party continued to focus attention on the need to strengthen its influence in the country side, on the struggle for the rights of the fellahs who constituted a large section of the population of Iraq, on working out an agrarian reform bill A valuable contribution to that problem was Fahid's leaflet Join the Fight Brother Fellah!" written in 1945 In this simple and lucid work, he said

"We are fighting and want you to fight with us to give every fellah land implements of labour and seed, and to deliver him from oppression by the tribal sheiks and land lords We want you to have a happy life in a free country We want a government in whose affairs foreigners will not interfere We are fighting and want you to fight with us for democratic rights that will guarantee the fellah a chance to elect a government that represents his interests and defends them a parliament without sheiks and feudal lords whose interests conflict with the interests of the peasants and the entire people"

The spring of 1946 brought a change for the worse in the domestic situation The reaction launched an offensive against the democratic rights of the Iraqi people The absence of unity among the national forces of the country made it easier for the reaction to pursue its aims Certain groups of the bourgeoisie, frightened by the growth of the democratic movement, entered into a conspiracy against the people with the feudal ruling clique

On June 28, 1946, the police opened fire on a demonstration which gathered in front of the statue of General Maude The statue stood in the square facing the British embassy until July 14, 1958 The demonstrators called for the abrogation of the Anglo Iraqi treaty of 1930 and the evacuation of the British army from Iraq and Palestine On July 12, the oil workers of Kirkuk assembled to draw up their demands

to the oil company Police detachments surrounded the workers and began to club them Five were killed and fourteen seriously wounded Several hundred more were arrested and sacked by the company

The British colonial authorities, who had instigated and fully supported the punitive measures of the Iraqi government, now began to bring additional army reinforcements into Iraq

In his articles and speeches of this period, Fahid urged the leaders of the national parties and organisations to show unity In one of the Party documents written by him then he said 'It is our cardinal problem today to focus the efforts of all the working people on our imperative tasks, in other words—to form a united national front The experience of various countries tells us that such a front is the only means to stop the forces of reaction and imperialism, the only weapon that can effectively defeat the reaction and liberate the oppressed from their chains The National Front will bring about a real turning point in the liberation movement and enable us to accomplish what we cannot accomplish when our forces are scattered "

Fahid warned that dissension among the leaders of the country's political organisations would harm not only the Communists, but the whole democratic movement That warning was soon justified The authorities closed down several newspapers and magazines including the organ of the bourgeois National Democratic Party, *Sawt al Ahali* The postal workers' trade union was disbanded Student and youth organisations came under the bans A purge was instituted in the state machine

In September 1946, Fahid succeeded in convocating a secret meeting of representatives from all six opposition parties, including the Constituent Council of the Party of National Liberation The meeting discussed the struggle against the government and its reactionary course, Fahid urged it to publish a joint statement and call a general strike The bour

geois leaders refused to appeal to the masses or support the general strike No agreement on unity of action was reached That smoothed the way for the ruling clique to press its offen sive against the people's vital interests

Trial and Imprisonment

At the end of 1946, Nuri es Said took up his duties as pre mier for the ninth time In his speech before a press confer ence on the occasion, he said he considered it a duty "to wipe out the problems of communism in Iraq" He went on "There is no place for Communists in our country The soil for com munism exists in the industrial countries, but ours is a back ward land "

In a few days, a wave of wholesale reprisals against the Communist Party and other democratic organisations swept the land Husain ash Shabibi, Muhammed Husain Abu l-Is and other members of the Constituent Council of the Party of National Liberation were arrested in the middle of Decem ber

On January 17, 1947, the house where Fahid and Zaki Basim were staying was surrounded by the police Local branches of the Communist Party in Baghdad and many other cities were raided

This was followed within a few days by the brief official announcement that "The secret police have traced the persons engaged in underground communist activity Several plants which published their secret printed matter as well as the newspaper *Al Kaida* have been confiscated Branches have also been discovered in other provinces of the country "

And that was all the public was told about the first days of the terror against the Communists of Iraq The exact num ber of those arrested is still unknown, as they were kept in different prisons Persons who had never belonged to the Par- ty—trade union activists, students who had spoken at meet-

ings, or journalists—were passed off as Communists by the police It was soon learned that most of the Party s organisa tions had escaped destruction But the Central Committee of the Party sustained heavy losses Its General Secretary, two members of the Political Bureau and several other leading workers were thrown behind bars Fahid and his comrades were imprisoned at a deportation point at Abu Ghurayba, about twenty kilometres to the north of Baghdad

There is much to tell about Zaki Muhammed Basim and Husain Muhammed ash Shabibi, members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iraq, arrested along with Fahid and, with him, hanged on the gallows two years later

Zaki Basim, whose Party pseudonym was Khasim, was born in Baghdad in the year 1913 He came of a working class family His parents were too poor to send their son to grammar school He knew poverty from earliest childhood—the dismal poverty of the Iraqi proletariat He began to work in a tanning shop at the age of ten He did not get a chance to study until he was much older, first he took courses to learn to read and write, and then he attended an evening school after work

He was twenty seven when he completed a two years' teachers training course He joined the Communist Party at the beginning of the Second World War, and before long became a member of its Central Committee A co foun der of the newspaper *Al Kaida*, with Fahid, and one of the latter's closest helpers, he gained the reputation of an able organiser of the toiling masses

Husain ash Shabibi, whose Party pseudonym was Sarim, was born in 1917 into a family several of whose members were prominent Shiite divines He attended grammar and secondary school in Nejef, a Shiite centre, and began to work as a teacher there He matriculated in 1939, in the Law School at Baghdad where he immediately associated himself with the secret students' circle Two years later he gave up his studies

and went back to teaching It was at this time that he joined the Communist Party A gifted poet and publicist, he gave all the ardour of his heart to the service of the people One of his poems says

> The tranquil life is not for us
> While tyrants rule with club and lash—
> First let us break the despots hold
> And build a better world for all

The year 1945 saw the publication of two of Husain's pamphlets They were "Independence and National Sov ereignty" and 'United National Front'

News of the arrest of leading members of the Iraqi Commun ist Party soon reached all corners of the land and was reported in the foreign press A group of Iraqi lawyers and writers appealed to the Regent Abdul Illah and the government for an explanation of the mass arrests The Home Minister and Chief of the Security Service published a statement in which they accused the arrested men of being anarchists and plotting to overthrow the government

The publicity which the arrest of the Communists received prevented the authorities from doing them secretly to death Yielding to the pressure of public opinion, the government announced that the Communist Party leaders would be tried in open court Although the promise was not kept, it did to an extent alleviate the lot of the accused It gave them the right to engage counsel Their closest relatives were allowed to attend the trial Several journalists and diplomats also follow ed the proceedings But the biggest advantage was that it gave the defendants a chance to state their views and principles in public

The trial began in May The situation in Iraq and the adjacent Arab countries was highly inauspicious for the defen- dants The anti communist hysteria that rocked Western Europe was echoed in the Arab East The official Baghdad press carried almost daily reports of the arrest of democratic

Fahid (on the right) in prison

leaders, the closing of newspapers of a Left or liberal trend, and police raids on the headquarters of all kinds of public organisations

Fahid was kept in chains, in a minute solitary cell He was not allowed to receive books or letters To break his stamina the investigator chose a moment just before the trial began to show him the records of the preliminary interrogations of several renegades who had succumbed to the third degree and agreed to give false evidence But nothing could break the spirit of the leader of the Iraqi working class Fahid prepared carefully for every session of the court He built up his own defence and that of his comrades not so much as a proof of their innocence as an exposure of the reactionary regime in Iraq

In his first speech, Fahid said "Because I am a patriot I have aligned myself with the movement known as communism I became an adherent of its ideas in 1932, although I participated in the national movement before that In adopting communist views I did not and do not see anything incompatible with my national loyalties In fact after joining the Communist Party I felt greater responsibility than ever to my country We Communists are opposed to imperialism and will continue to fight against it "

Day by day Fahid demolished the charges levelled against the Communists His apt replies and clever parrying of the prosecution embarrassed the judges more than once A British "consultant", evidently considered an expert in frame ups against Communists, was hastily summoned from London to help the Iraqi concocters of the case Ministers, generals and heads of the security service often filled the courtroom The British embassy closely followed the trial

'Why do you break the law banning secret activity?" the judge asked Fahid

"We make no secret of our views and aims," was his calm reply "We have published them in the Party Programme which any literate person can read We only conceal our or-

ganisations to protect them against the raids of the police They are the ones who break the law "

At one of the sessions the judge saw fit to heap abuse on the Arabian and British Communists, Fahid interrupted him to say that he stood for union not only with the Arab peo ples, but with the working people of the whole world "It is the British monopolies, and not the British people who are the enemies of the Iraqis," he said

He repudiated the charge of espionage against the Party with the same cogency "The prosecutor has accused our Party of maintaining ties with the ambassador of a certain foreign power He has mentioned a letter which no one has shown me as yet It is my belief that the prosecutor himself has seen no such letter, nor does he believe that police lie," was his rebuttal

Zaki Basim made a memorable speech in the courtroom He wound up with the words

"I know you will hang us But you can't hang our whole Party, the whole working class, our whole people The day will come when the people will deal with you as you are dealing with us now!"

It is impossible to read the last words pronounced by Fahid on behalf of the whole group without deep emotion

'Why is the prohibition of the Communist Party of Iraq demanded?" he asked "Is it the demand of the Iraqi wor kers, or of the foreigners who are not only stealing our wealth, but who are sucking the blood of our workers and the whole nation? We stand before the court, but we do not ask for leniency Only the guilty plead for mercy We are not out to defend ourselves, we do not ask for any personal clemency We conclude our defence with two slogans

"Long live the people!

"Long live justice!"

Although the indictment was not substantiated, the court passed severe sentences Fahid and Basim were sentenced to be hanged, and fourteen of their comrades to varying prison

terms ranging from four years to life Shabibi also received a prison term

The verdict of the Baghdad court evoked protests not only in Iraq, but all over the world Telegrams without end reached the government, newspapers in many countries demanded a re trial The Premier, the Ministry of Justice, the news papers received innumerable letters from Iraqi workers wri ters, lawyers, students and artisans calling for the repeal of the sentences Similar letters and telegrams arrived from Pa lestine, England, Lebanon, Syria, Italy and other countries

"What danger to Iraq made the court pass death sentence on the fighters against imperialism and reaction, against the fettering treaties and iron shackles that weigh down the country of Harun ar Rashid?" asked the Lebanese newspaper *Al Hadaf* A member of the British House of Commons asked the Foreign Secretary to use his influence with the Iraqi government to prevent the verdict from being put into effect

The Iraqi government had to beat a retreat On June 23, 1947, the highest court of appeals commuted Fahid's death sentence to twenty years' and Basim's to fifteen years' im prisonment They were put in the Al Kut prison, where they found themselves in the company of other Communists sen tenced at similar trials in Baghdad and other cities

Forty prisoners most of them Communists, were squeezed into three crowded cells They slept on the floor, were poorly fed and given putrid water to drink But Fahid and his comra des did not despair, they were determined to go on living and working even under those conditions, and they succeeded

We have this account of their existence in prison from Muhammed al Hakim, who knew Fahid in prison

"I was brought to the Al Kut prison in 1948, and found myself among people of different views and convictions The Communists formed a close knit group and went on working to the best of their ability under the conditions They busied themselves teaching the prisoners and keeping up their spirits

and health Non Party inmates—students, teachers and oth er intellectuals united by the common cause of their coun try's liberation from imperialism, its independence and natio nal sovereignty—rallied around the Communists I was among those who sought their guidance

'Fahid and I were in the same cell for quite some time, and I realised that he was the soul of their organisation He was respected and his words heeded "

In January 1948, the Sālih Jābr government conspired with Britain and signed a new treaty which came to be known as the Portsmouth Treaty The provisions of this treaty were unfavourable to Iraq It left the British military bases at Habbaniah and Shaibah intact, involved Iraq in the Brit ish imperialists' war gambles, and opened its doors wide to the entry of British troops even in peacetime

The Iraqi public met the treaty in arms Its text was published in the Baghdad press on the morning of January 16, and by noon the first demonstrations broke out in the city Their tenor was set by the students, who declared a three day strike Two days later the legal bourgeois political parties came out against the treaty On January 20th, the people of the capital demonstrated under the slogans "Down with the Treaty!", "Death to Imperialism!", "Long Live Independent Iraq!' Bloody clashes ensued between the demonstrators and police as a result of which eight people were killed and more than a hundred wounded The trade unions called for a general strike

One hundred thousand people poured out onto the streets of Baghdad on January 25 in a huge demonstration actively promoted by the Communists Real battles between the de monstrators and the police took place on the bridges crossing the Tigris, before the Iraqi parliament and the premises of the cabinet Many demonstrators were killed and wounded that day, but the people were the victors in the end The pre sident of parliament and a group of deputies resigned, and with them two of the ministers of the cabinet The prime mini-

ster and Nuri es Said, who was the chairman of the senate at the time, fled the country On February 3, the new cabinet officially repudiated the Portsmouth Treaty

For the Iraqi people that was a signal victory over imperialism and reaction, but it did not bear much fruit Power remained in the hands of the feudal lords, court and conservative groups They merely drew back their claws for a while and resorted to more subtle manoeuvres The lamentable division of the forces of the nation again prevented the consolidation of the people's gains

The January events did however make it possible for the Communist Party to activate its work *Al Kaida* began to come out again Fahid was able to contact the Central Committee and send his articles to the press For some time the Communists published a legal newspaper called *Al Asas*, which appeared as a non Party independent periodical, and carried a good many appeals for the commutation of the sentences passed against Fahid and his comrades

At the end of March, the situation in Iraq began to change The prospect of the proclamation of the state of Israel had spawned preparations for war in Palestine These preparations were ushered in by an offensive against the rights the people had won in January and February In the middle of April an official denunciation of so called 'subversive activity" was issued by the head of the Department of Propaganda There were renewed newspaper closures and arrests

On May 15, the British Army left Palestine and the Arab Israeli war began Martial law was introduced in Iraq The Arab countries were infected with the fever of chauvinism, the most reactionary forces got busy

Early in January 1949, Nuri es Said was re appointed to the premiership And again, as two years before, he began his term with a campaign against all adherents of democratic views The wave of anti communism surged to a new height "Under the previous cabinet," that executioner of Iraqi democracy told parliament, "the police authorities uncovered

Communist organisations and arrested quite a few Communists, very important documents and decisions were found From 150 to 160 people were arrested The present government has no other intention but to purge the country of Communists and combat Communism itself " Those words had an ominous ring

Communism Is Stronger than Death

At the end of January, the rumour was whispered in the Al Kut prison that Fahid, Basim and Shabibi were to be tried again When the three were placed in a separate cell, the prisoners declared a hunger strike in protest But it failed of its purpose, as the leaders of the Communist Party were transported, in chains, to Baghdad

There they were tried by a military tribunal The sessions were strictly in camera Even the verdict read out to the defendants on the third day was kept a secret It was not made public until it had been put into effect The main point of the indictment rested on the statement of the renegade Malik Saif, who turned police informer, that while in prison Fahid and his friends had continued to direct the work of the Party At this same time several dozen other Communists were secretly convicted by the tribunal, which had denied them defence counsel and witnesses

Here is an account of the last three days of the life of the three Communist Party leaders It was put down from the words of a former inmate of the Central Baghdad Prison

"The nights of February 14th and 15th were the most terrible in my life I was kept in cell No 24, Fahid in No 27, Zaki in No 29, and Husain in No 19 Ever since February 10, when the verdict came, we hoped that it would be repealed by some miracle Our cells, five square metres in size, were dark and damp But we did not despair and sang our militant songs 'The People Do Not Die, They Are Immortal,'

'Iraq Will Be Free, Tyranny Will Fall' The words of the songs echoed beneath the stone arches of the dungeon

'At about five o'clock in the evening of February 13 we heard noises in the corridor, and then a loud voice which seemed to me the most hateful voice I had ever heard As its owner reached each of the three cells, he shouted the words of the royal edict confirming the death sentence Despite the thick prison walls that separated us we knew that our heroes would not cringe at these dreadful words

"Then the hangmen asked the condemned whom they would like to see before they died Fahid asked for a rendez vous with his comrades Zaki and Husain, and also with his brother Dahud, incarcerated in the same prison He wanted to shake hands with his militant comrades and say good bye to them for the last time Through Dahud he sent a message to his mother 'When you see our mother,' he said 'tell her that Yussuf caused her much worry and grief but that he could not see any other road for himself except the one he took—the road of national struggle for emancipation from im perialism Say good bye to her for me, a last good bye' To his brother he said 'Remember that I died a Communist Communism is stronger than death!'

"Basim's parting words to his mother were sustained in the same noble spirit 'Don't cry, Mother You should be proud that your son is dying a Communist If I could come back to earth, I would again choose the same road '

"The last act of the tragedy was played out at the break of day on the 14th of February Fahid and Husain were led out of their cells under a strong guard In the corridor Fahid repeated the words 'Good bye comrades, good bye!' three times in succession, and so loud that everybody could hear him

"Then Husain shouted three times

"'Farewell, brothers!' He was the youngest of the three He was just going on 32

"The next morning was Zaki's turn Like his comrades,

he shouted to us 'Farewell, brothers, for I am going to the gallows Remember me well!'

"We did not shed tears Clutching at the iron bars, we sang our revolutionary anthem " They were hanged singly, in different squares, at an early morning hour before the inhabitants were allowed to leave their houses in this country under martial law Very few people witnessed the executions

Comrade Fahid mounted the steps to the gallows with firm steps The hangman wanted to blindfold him, but he pushed aside his hand, and, turning his gaze to the square,* shouted for the last time, every word stressed

'Communism is stronger than death and beyond the reach of the gallows!"

That is how these valiant men, these Communists and true sons of Iraq, met their deaths To the end their lives were a model of service to the people, they did not flinch in their last hour February 14 and 15, 1949, will go down forever as black pages in the history of colonialism and Arab reaction, which worked hand in glove in Iraq

* * *

Years passed and the Communist Party recovered from its wounds The place of its martyred heroes was filled by new leaders By July 14, 1958, when the monarchy was overthrown, the Communist Party of Iraq had become the largest political organisation in the country and the greatest influence in the trade union, youth and peasant movements The foul crimes of Nuri es Said and the other imperialist flunkeys could not prevent the spread of communist ideas

After the revolution a collection of articles and speeches by Fahid and his militant comrades was published in Baghdad

In January 1959, a special commission of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Iraq repudiated the sentences

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* He was hanged in the square now called Square of the National Museum

passed ten years before "Investigation has shown," says its decision, "that citizen Yussuf Suleiman Yussuf (Fahid) and his colleagues sought to emancipate the country and change its system of government They were condemned by a corrupt government Their services to the people deserve national recognition It has therefore been decided to grant them full amnesty in the eyes of the law "

A neglected grave was found at the Martyrs' Cemetery It proved to be the grave of Fahid Friends tended it and clothed it in white marble On the 10th anniversary of the execution of Fahid and his comrades, all the working people of Baghdad payed homage to their great compatriots

Many a demonstration had been held in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in the two years following the revolution But never had there been a demonstration such as this On Feb ruary 16, 1959, the people of Baghdad moved at first in groups and then in long columns towards the Martyrs' Cemetery Oil refinery workers and railwaymen came along straight from the day s shift, in their soiled overalls A mountain of fresh flowers, red ribbons and laurel wreaths grew up over the marble slab "Fahid will remain a torch forever lighting the path of our struggle," wrote the students of Baghdad University across their wreath

The stars were shining brightly in the dark tropical sky, but the silent columns came on and on Factory and office workers, teachers, artisans, delegations from neighbouring villages swelled the ranks People paused a moment to ex change a few whispered words, and then passed into the dark ness, only to be followed by others There were no meetings and no speeches But the people's unspoken vow and clenched fists said more than any words could say

Salaam Adel

Salaam Adel

On March 7 1963, the international communist and workers' movement sustained a grave loss On that day the Iraqi authorities wreaked brutal vengeance on a true son of the Iraqi people, Salaam Adel (Husain ar Radi) first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iraq, and two of his comrades in arms The execution was carried out stealthily, unknown to the people

Salaam Adel gave all his energies and talents to his people His life was one of uninterrupted struggle for the emancipation of his country from imperialist rule, for peace and friendship among the nations

Husain ar Radi was born into a working class family at Nejef, a town on the banks of the Euphrates in the year 1924 Nejef is the 'sacred city of the Muslim Shiites, a Mecca for hosts of religious pilgrims In its numerous religious schools young men from the other Muslim countries bent their heads over the texts of the Koran together with their Iraqi fellows And among them was Husain ar Radi, who studied the Koran at the famous Nejef mosque, where the remains of the Fourth Khalif Ali, founder of the Shiite sect, are said to repose The lines of the Koran did not interest Husain, however After

graduating from the school at Nejef, he left behind that sti fling atmosphere, and enrolled in the Baghdad Teachers' College

His studies at the Teachers College coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War and the treacherous attack of nazi Germany on the Soviet Union Like all his country men, Husain followed the Soviet people's heroic struggle with the closest interest He waited impatiently for every report of the victories of the Soviet Army and often told his fellow students at the hostel about the heroism of the Soviet fighting men His love for the Soviet people and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was conceived at this grim period of their history "That love stimulated and inspired him all through his radiant life," said one of his friends

In Baghdad, Husain observed the growing discontent of his people with the British colonialists and the broad sweep which the movement for the toilers rights acquired With his fellow students he took an active part in the democratic and national liberation movement for the emancipation of his people from colonial oppression He was not a Communist as yet But he learned as a student of the existence of the Com munist Party of Iraq, and after acquainting himself with its underground newspaper, began to seek contacts with the Party

He joined the Communist Party in 1943, after graduating from the Teachers College He carried out important Party assignments while working as a teacher in the town of Diwa niya His selfless devotion to the cause of the Party, conscien tiousness and discipline soon won him the respect and affec tion of his Party comrades Before long he was elected a member of the Diwaniya municipal committee of the Com munist Party of Iraq

In 1946, Iraq was subjected to a wave of reprisals against the democratic elements in the country who had been fighting for the abrogation of the unfair Anglo Iraqi treaty of 1930 Political parties were banned, the trade unions dissolved and their leaders put into prison

Salaam Adel was dismissed from his teaching post for participating in the revolutionary movement and could not obtain other employment But instead of giving in to despair, he moved to Baghdad and threw himself even more zealously into Party work His close friendship with the secretary of the Communist Party of Iraq Comrade Fahid, began at this time

While Comrade Fahid and other members of the Central Committee languished in prison, Salaam Adel helped to organise the popular uprising against the Portsmouth Treaty of 1948 by which Iraqi territory remained a British military base, and the Iraqi government lost its independence in the domain of foreign policy (in the domestic sphere it no longer had any)

The uprising led by the Communist Party, spread to all parts of the country The ratification of the Treaty was prevented This was a big victory for the people and the Communist Party of Iraq

In January 1949, Nuri es Said the British flunkey, whose one purpose was to crush the national liberation movement, again found himself at the head of the government His chief target was the Communist Party of Iraq February 1949 saw the execution by hanging, after a long period of imprisonment, of Comrade Fahid, the General Secretary of the Party, and members of the Political Bureau of its Central Committee Zaki Basim and Husain ash Shabibi

Thousands of patriots, among them the Communists who had joined in the struggle against British domination, were thrown into prisons and concentration camps Salaam Adel was also arrested

Prison did not break his will His fellow prisoners were inspired by his self control and courage An underground meeting of the Communist prisoners chose him to head the illegal prison library, a dangerous duty which he discharged extremely well In a letter to friends written from prison, Salaam Adel said 'We Communists must be fearless in the fight for the happiness of the people We believe in our victo-

ry Once we win the fight, we'll give the flunkeys of imperialism and the flunkeys of the flunkeys of imperialism their due " That belief in the victory of the just cause to which he had dedicated his life never left Salaam Adel It was not shaken by the tortures to which he was subjected in prison nor the difficulties that beset every step of his subsequent struggle, under illegal conditions for the happiness of his people He cherished the name of Communist as the apple of his eye

Adel was ordered by the authorities to live in the town of Ramadi on his release from prison, and was placed under police surveillance A few days later he fled the town, however, and went to Basra to head the large Party district branch He was soon able to contact the Party s units throughout the district, as well as the workers at the Basra docks and the Basra Petroleum Company The illegal mimeographed news paper called *Saut al Kadih* which he started exposed the venal Nuri es Said regime, and was eagerly read by the workers

In 1953, Salaam Adel led a strike at the Basra Petro leum Company involving two thousand men The strikers put forward nineteen demands, among them—for higher wages and the right to organise

"This is the first real workers' strike I have led," Adel told his friends in another letter 'It requires the greatest vigilance " He organised a strike committee and rallied all patriotic elements in the Basra district to its support The government tried to drown the strike in the blood of the work ers "When the police opened fire on a workers' demonstra tion in Basra," one of the strikers later recalled, "Adel, mov ing in the thick of the demonstration, where he could see his comrades being picked off by police bullets, shouted at the thugs 'Your government will find a grave in the pure blood you are shedding! "

The strike was defeated, but the company had to satisfy fifteen of the demands put forward by the strike committee, and foremost among them the demand for the right to organise

in trade unions This was a major victory for the workers under the leadership of the Party organisation of which Salaam Adel was the head

Adel s outstanding organisational ability and unwavering devotion to the people in their struggle against colonialism were recognised by the Party membership He was elected a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iraq, and in 1954 put in charge of the Middle Euphrates Party branch He did important work among the peasants, helping to strengthen the alliance of the workers and peasants

The year 1954 also saw his election as a full member of the Central Committee and delegate from the C P I to the London conference of Communist Parties of the British Commonwealth countries

The execution of Comrade Fahid and wholesale arrests of Party members had greatly weakened the Iraqi Communist Party and divided its forces Furthermore, it was being corroded from within by factionalism Countless groups arose, each proclaiming itself the one "true" Communist Party of Iraq and accusing the others of opportunism and even treason

The Political Bureau members who had escaped the wave of terror were guilty of a number of serious political and organisational mistakes The slogan "For a United National Front, for a National Democratic Government" was revised by them to read "For a Workers and Peasants' Front, for the Proletarian Revolution!" Their erroneous campaign against the national bourgeoisie and intelligentsia had undermined the C P I 's cooperation with the other national parties and progressive elements of the country Unstable elements began to creep into the Party's ranks Despite the rampage of reaction, despite these heavy losses and the serious mistakes made by the leadership, the C P I nevertheless continued the struggle against imperialism and reaction and worked for the unification of its ranks

In June 1953, at the insistence of Salaam Adel and several other Central Committee members, the Central Committee held a meeting which removed the first secretary of the Party from his post for violating all standards of Party life and setting up a personal dictatorship in the Party Salaam Adel was elected first secretary of the Central Committee of the C P I in his place Following a report by Adel, the meeting drew up a new political and tactical programme which took account of the real state of affairs in the country It issued an appeal to the working people of Iraq urging them to oppose the Baghdad Pact and cooperate with the other Arab countries in the fight against imperialism The appeal called for consolidation of the national forces of the country to gain national independence The meeting also outlined measures to remedy the lack of unity in the Party

The June meeting of the Central Committee of the C P I has gone down as an important landmark in the history of the Party It led to notable changes in all the Party s activities

The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its historic decisions had a tremendous effect on the development of the communist movement in Iraq

During this period of the struggle of the Iraqi people against imperialist domination and the Baghdad Pact Salaam Adel particularly focused his attention on the amalgamation of the communist organisations of the country on strengthening the unity of the Party s ranks The newspaper *Al Kaida*, now the Party's militant propaganda organ, proved very useful in that respect In his articles for the paper, Salaam Adel indicated that a split in the Party would be the "greatest menace to the Party and the national movement" His efforts and the part he played in the negotiations with the leaders of the splinter groups in the middle of 1956 led to mutual admissions of mistakes, and the communist groups were united within the framework of one Communist Party of Iraq That achievement did much to raise the Party's

prestige in the eyes of the working people and enhance its political influence

In September 1956 the Communist Party of Iraq held a second conference which discussed and approved 'the Party's political line in the fight for national liberation', a line charted under Salaam Adel's direct guidance, in the light of the decisions of the 20th Congress of the C P S U The conference elected a new Central Committee and Political Bureau headed by Salaam Adel

It was his boundless energy and devotion to the Marxist Leninist principles of collective leadership that enabled the Communist Party of Iraq to form a National Front comprising, alongside the C P I the National Democratic Party the Istiqlal (Independence) Party and the Socialist Party of Arab Regeneration or Baath Through this Front the C P I conducted an extensive campaign to mobilise the masses for the fight for national independence and the democratic transformation of the country Local National Front Committees were set up in all large cities and populated centres and militant shock brigades began to be formed

As a result of these measures, the Communist Party was in a position by the end of 1956 to direct the mass action of the Iraqi people against the Nuri es Said regime and the Baghdad Pact A statement published in the name of the Supreme Committee of the National Front presented the people's nationwide demands for the removal of the Nuri es Said cabinet, disavowal of the Baghdad Pact resistance to all manner of imperialist interference in Iraqi affairs, and the granting of democratic constitutional rights to the people

The C P I, under Salaam Adel's leadership was making headway in the army as well Close contacts were established with the patriotic officers The Party's objective was to turn the army into the shock force of the Revolution On July 12, 1958, two days before the Revolution the Central Committee of the C P I distributed an Appeal to all Party units, which had been drawn up by Salaam Adel and approved by

the Political Bureau, alerting the Communists to be ready for the coming battles

On the morning of July 14, the Baghdad radio proclaimed the victory of the Revolution and the forming of a new government headed by Abdel Karim el Kassem

All those who were fortunate enough to visit Baghdad during the months immediately following the July Revolution are not likely to forget that tempestuous period in the history of Iraq as long as they live It may well be said that the nation breathed freely for the first time in its long history Meetings and demonstrations took place now in one now in another part of the city Delegations flocked to Baghdad from the provinces from remote towns from different tribes

In the tussle that ensued between the parties associated with the National Front for influence on the masses the C P I gradually came out on top Officially, the Party's activity was still under a ban even after the Revolution, but in actual fact it functioned without restraint and revised its work along legal lines after the long years when it was obliged to function underground Political prisoners were set free, and among those released were 200 Communists

Marked differences of opinion arose in government circles and the leadership of the National Front as to the direction Iraq's future development should take The Right wing, made up of leaders of the Istiqlal and Baath parties and some army officers, opposed the democratisation of the country s political life, the introduction of radical economic measures, agrarian reforms, etc But they could not withstand the pressure of the masses When they met with defeat on the political arena, they resorted to conspiratorial activity against the Republic At that crucial juncture, when the Iraqi Communist Party's former allies in the National Front were deserting to the camp of the enemies of the Republic, the Communists directed the struggle of the masses against the plotters In Baghdad, Basra and other large cities, peoples'

guards units were formed, in the factories and offices they had parallels in the committees for defence of the Republic More often than not, Communists were chosen to head the committees

The prestige of the C P I soared considerably during this period Actually this was the first time in the history of Iraq that the Party had been allowed to function legally Its membership increased rapidly Over a period of several months at the end of 1958 and beginning of 1959, several thousand workers, students and intellectuals in Baghdad alone applied for Party membership Communists were elected to the leadership of most trade unions, the unions of democra tic youth the students' alliance, the League in Defence of the Rights of Women

January 1959 saw the appearance of the first legal issue of the Party newspaper *Ittihad al Shaab*, the publication of which was originally begun in 1956, when it replaced the newspaper *Al Kaida* Before long *Ittihad al Shaab* was the most popular newspaper in the country, with a circulation of 35,000 copies, or twice that of the most widely read bourge ois newspapers in Iraq

Salaam Adel worked in one of the editorial offices of the *Ittihad al Shaab* He often spent the night there, for meet ings and talks with comrades had a way of dragging on until dawn With his customary calm and unhurried manner he showered the comrades with questions about the situation in the localities from which they hailed Then they would all put their heads together to outline measures calculated to strengthen the position of the supporters of the Republic or of the Party district or factory locals, as the case might be

The situation in the country was changing rapidly A drastic reorganisation within the Communist Party was un dertaken in order to strengthen its ranks and implement the tactics that would preserve the gains of the Republic and en sure the country's further democratic development The re organisation, zealously promoted by Salaam Adel, affected

all levels of the Party s structure, from the smallest local units to the Central Committee Simultaneously the Central Committee applied itself to drafting a new Party programme

The C P I marked a number of major victories in the spring of 1959 the Mosul conspiracy against the Republic was foiled under its leadership, the Communists' slogan for immediate withdrawal of Iraq from the aggressive Baghdad Pact encountered universal support, and the government passed a decision to that effect On March 24, 1959 Premier Kassem announced that Iraq had officially severed its ties with the Baghdad Pact Although that act merely gave de jure confirmation to a situation that had existed de facto ever since the overthrow of the monarchy, the people hailed it as a great victory over imperialism and its Iraqi minions By their jubilant demonstrations and huge meetings they expressed their response to that outstanding event in the histo ry of their country

A discussion was started in the spring of 1959 within the leadership of the C P I on the paths of the country's further development and the Party's current strategy The proposals of certain comrades were criticised as Leftist twistings whose application had already done the Party no little harm

Comrade Adel and his closest colleagues in the Central Committee did their utmost to correct the mistakes made A plenary meeting was called in the summer of 1959 under the chairmanship of Adel It severely criticised those who had ignored the real relation of class and political forces in the country and mapped out ways and means of organisationally strengthening the Party, whose numbers had multiplied sev eral times over in the past year

In January 1960, the Iraqi government adopted Law No 1, legalising the activity of political parties and public organisations

A group of leaders of the C P I , headed by Salaam Adel, appointed themselves a founding committee and applied to the Home Ministry for permission to establish a legal Com

Demonstration in Baghdad on suppression of the Mosul reactionary putsch March 1959

munist Party The request was accompanied by a copy of the Party Rules and its Political Programme, which remains one of the most important documents adopted by the C P I The Programme assesses the Revolution of 1958 as follows The Revolution of July 14 whose chief aim was the emancipation of the nation from imperialist domination, feudal exploi tation and the injustices of the former regime was a people's revolution in which millions of peasants, workers and other wide sections of the populace took part The popular character of that Revolution is particularly apparent under the present historical conditions in view of the growth and consolida tion of the socialist camp the striking spread of progressive ideas, and the vanguard role the working class is playing in the development of society "

The Programme outlined the goals to which the Commun ist Party was committed, including the industrialisation of

the country, the complete eradication of feudalism, and the solution of the agrarian question It demanded democratic rights for the people, the advancement of their cultural level, and the regulation of the nationalities problem in Iraq In this Programme the Communists of Iraq again demonstrated that they were the staunchest champions of the interests of the whole people

The Home Ministry refused the Communists permission to legalise their activity The founding committee of the C P I thereupon submitted a second request in which it changed the name of the Party to the *Ittihad al Shaab* That name was fully justified inasmuch as the local communist units had already adopted the name of the Party's central organ, that publication having proved in practice to be not only a collective propagandist but also a collective organiser of the masses But this request, too was rejected by the Home Ministry

The Ministry's refusal coincided with a vicious campaign against the Communists in the press Just before that, the reactionary forces of the country had united on an anti communist platform The Right wing in government circles and groups of influential officers joined in the campaign, and were given the support of the oil companies stooges Prime Minister Kassem ignoring the laws of the class struggle, thought he could play on the contradictions between the weakened Right and the Left to gain a free hand for himself and run the country as he liked

The so called Mosul Case was cooked up against those responsible for the defeat of the anti government rising in the spring of 1959 The Communists indicted in the case were sentenced to death and many other participants given prison terms The Mosul Case was only one of the reaction's many sallies as it began to rear its head again in Iraq The government banned the *Ittihad al Shaab* and other communist publications Prominent trade union and youth leaders, journalists, and active peace champions found themselves

Salaam Adel in Moscow during the 22nd Congress of the C P S U

behind bars The gains of the Revolution of July 14 were in jeopardy

Comrade Adel directed the reorganisation of the Party's work relative to the new conditions Its leading bodies went

underground Combining legal and illegal forms of work, the Party was able to check the mounting offensive of the reaction

On being deprived of its regular periodicals, the Party began to communicate with the masses through the medium of leaflets, several of them written by Adel At his suggestion the Party began to publish an illegal newspaper called *Tarik al Shaab* (The People's Road), and succeeded in bringing it out regularly for a while

The situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate all through 1962 Prime Minister Kassem s class limitations, reflected in his denouncing the reaction in words and doing nothing to check its onslaught in deeds, enabled the Rightist groupings to form an anti government bloc which won over several army units to its side

Unfortunately, little is known as yet about this period of Adel's life, during which he functioned underground and his work as head of the Party was clothed in secrecy

On the morning of February 8, 1963, the Baghdad radio announced that a coup had taken place, that General Kassem had been assassinated, and that power had been seized by the National Council of the Revolutionary Command Actually General Kassem surrendered and was shot on the day after the fighting near the Defence Ministry

The Baghdad Communist Party branch tried to put up a resistance to the plotters The workers demonstrated for defence of the Republic With nothing but sticks and stones for weapons, the workers and youth could not hold out against tanks and artillery It is a paradox indeed that the people who rose to the defence of the government were those who had been disarmed by that same government

Immediately after the coup, units of the so called National Guard made up of armed youngsters between the ages of 14 and 17 began to round up both rank and file and leading members of the Communist Party Hundreds, perhaps thousands of Communists were thrown behind bars

A street in Moscow is named after Salaam Adel

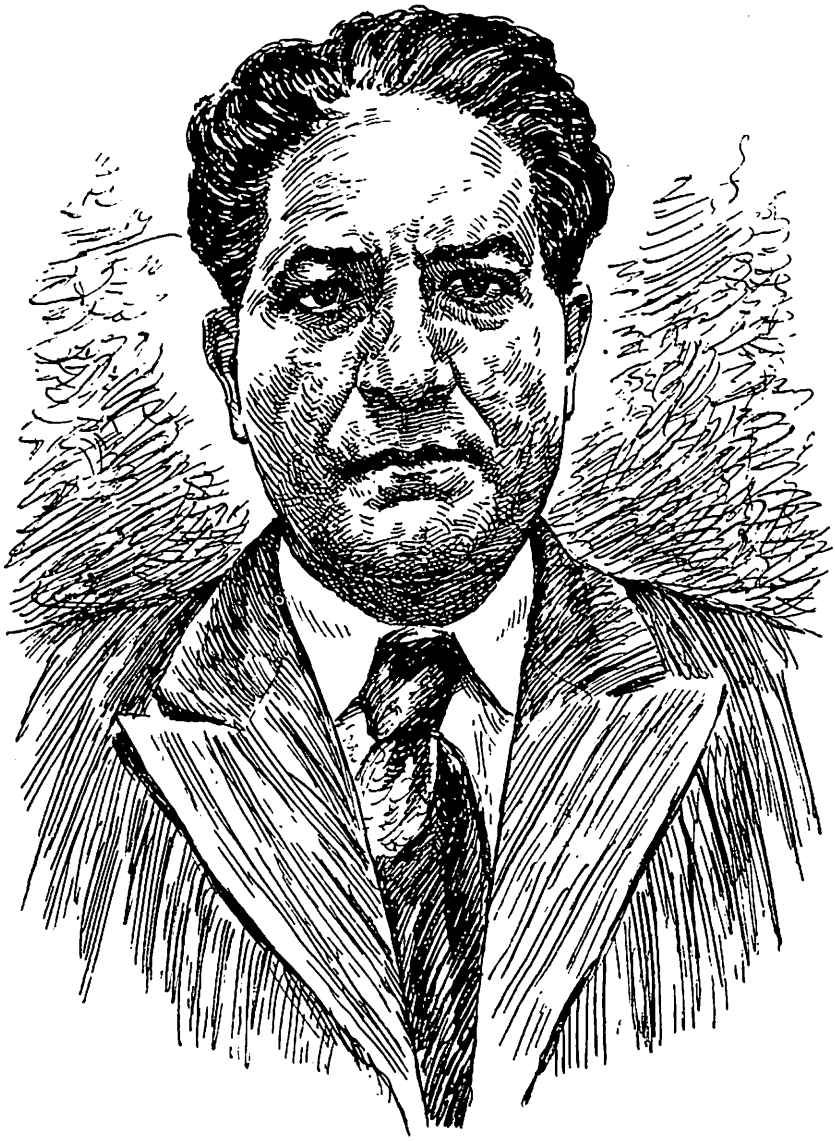
Some were shot on the spot, allegedly for trying to offer resistance

During one round up, a punitive group came upon the hiding place of Salaam Adel and several other prominent Communists Salaam Adel died as a result of brutal torture on March 5, 1963 He was true to the bitter end to his Com munist ideals his people, and the cause to which he had dedicated his whole life

The official statement of the Iraqi military governor general, broadcast over the Baghdad radio on March 9 announced that three leaders of the Communist Party of Iraq had been sentenced to death by a military tribunal and that the sentence had been carried out The three communist leaders had faced a charge of instigating to acts resulting in the murder of innocent people

Not only the vicious murder of Salaam Adel and his com rades, but even the indictment under which they were court martialled aroused the indignation and anger of progressive men and women in Iraq and other countries 'That monstrous crime has horrified progressive people all over the world," said the statement of the Central Committee of the C P S U 'It shows that the Iraqi authorities, despite their lip service to the UN Charter and Declaration on the Rights of Man despite the Iraqi government s official proclamation of a po licy of 'freedom, unity and socialism', are flouting the ele mentary principles of humanity and democracy "

Salaam Adel perished, but the Communist Party of Iraq continues the work started by Fahid and then Adel



Giuseppe Di Vittorio

Giuseppe Di Vittorio

Among the revolutionaries prominent in the West-European working class movement of the 20th century, a place of honour no doubt belongs to Giuseppe Di Vittorio For many years the recognised leader of the Italian trade unions, he was also one of the outstanding figures of the international democratic trade union movement He exerted a lasting influence on the development of the Italian working class struggle and the fight for the unity of the toiling masses of his country

The story of Di Vittorio's life reflects the course of and processes operating in the working class movement of the West European countries in the 20th century He was born into the family of a farm labourer on August 11, 1892, at the rural centre of Cerignola, which lies in the fertile lowlands of the Adriatic seacoast in southern Italy, under the "spur" of the Italian boot His father's death made it necessary for Giuseppe to leave primary school in the second form and go to work on the land Instead of playing games and going to school as children should at that age, his early years were compounded of back breaking toil, hunger and degrada tion

Di Vittorio became a member of the Agricultural Labourers Union at the age of twelve, at thirteen he was elected to the Cerignola Executive of the union Deprived of a formal education, he studied a great deal on his own, and carried that habit through life

When he was sixteen, Giuseppe organised the first socialist youth circle in Cerignola The circle quickly gained popularity among the farm workers and poor peasants and grew until it counted more than 600 members The importance of the circle transcended the limits of the rural seat where it originated and became the centre of socialist propaganda and work among the young people of the whole department of Apulia When in 1910 its young Socialists held the first department wide congress, Giuseppe Di Vittorio was elected the secretary of their organisation He was only eighteen at the time

Apulia at that time still laboured under the sway of feudal survivals the owner of the land was the undisputed master of the lives of those who worked it There was no labour legislation at all, the impoverished and hungry farmhands who lived in miserable hovels and were unemployed half of the year worked as much as 18 to 20 hours a day during the summer months The beginning of the 20th century saw a marked rise in the struggle of the rural proletariat throughout the south of Italy and much of the credit for the changing mood of the area lay at the doors of its socialist organisations and the youth movement And so, while the old customs gave the landowner the right to beat his labourers, one of the first slogans raised and defended by these young Socialists was

"Anybody who beats his farmhand will be beaten himself "

The application of that slogan earned the socialist youth organisation of Apulia the boundless respect of the people The young Socialists also fought for better working conditions, the introduction of labour laws, the construction of

evening schools, distribution of books, and so on This democratic movement resulted quite soon in substantial improvements in the legal and material conditions of the toiling masses of Apulia

Every victory gained was hard fought, to be sure Di Vittorio first saw the inside of a prison in 1910, two years later he was again jailed for his leading part in the farm labourers strike By that time he was one of the leaders of the Labour Office in his native town and an activist in the Labour Office of the departmental centre, Bari In 1913, a very popular figure among the population of the farming districts, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Left Italian Trade Union League (Unione Sindicale italiane)

In 1914, he led the Bari general strike which has gone down in the history of the Italian working class movement as "Red Week" The strike was political in character, having been called in defence of the democratic freedoms Di Vittorio was arrested Obliged to leave the country on his release, he made Switzerland his first land of emigration, or, as he later called it, his "university campus" Under the guidance of experienced comrades he applied himself diligently to the study of the works of Marx and Engels and, simultaneously, to broadening his general knowledge and intellectual background

In 1915, after Italy entered the First World War, Di Vittorio returned to his homeland, was called up for service, sent to the front, and wounded in battle This army experience came in handy later, when he fought in Spain But meanwhile the army authorities found him "subversive", had him interned, and then despatched him to a camp in the Italian colony of Lybia

Upon the termination of the war, Di Vittorio went home to Cerignola He became the secretary of the Cerignola, and then the Bari, Labour Office He led the trade union battles of the peasants and agricultural labourers with characteristic energy and determination and his popularity soared

To combat the growth of the working class and overall democratic movements, the landowners in the south and monopolists in the north turned to the fascists for help Fierce fighting took place between the toilers and the blackshirts With the connivance of the government, the latter raided the headquarters of the trade unions, cooperative societies, Left parties, and even the homes of individual activists A general strike in protest against fascist violence broke out in Bari and several adjacent towns on June 2, 1920 The strike was put down by government troops, and Di Vittorio was again jailed as its leader But many crimes that had been committed by the fascist hoodlums were now laid at his door His life was in danger He was saved by the people of Apulia whose interests he had so brilliantly championed the general elections came along just then, and they elected him to parliament The fascists tried in every way to prevent his election, deliberately instigating street rioting on election day during which twelve farmhands were killed And still the prison director had to invite the "dangerous criminal" Di Vittorio to his office and tell him "Signor Di Vittorio, you have been elected a deputy to parliament " At the prison gates, Di Vittorio was met by columns of demonstrators carrying flowers and flags There were delegations from all over Apulia

The struggle against fascism, bloody and bloodless, went on day after day, taxing the energies of all democrats The implicit logic of this struggle brought Di Vittorio into the ranks of the Italian Communist Party in 1924 His example was followed by the majority of active trade unionists in Apulia, by Left Socialists, and by thousands of farm labourers

Di Vittorio soon proved himself a leader of staunch communist calibre He continued his study of Marxist-Leninist theory, following the political line charted out by Gramsci and Togliatti, he focused his attention on the realisation of the slogan raised by the leadership of the Communist Party

for unity of the peasant masses of the south with the industrial workers of the north Without such unity the struggle against fascism, for democracy and socialism could not succeed

Also in 1924, Di Vittorio became a member of the Agricultural Commission of the Communist Party of Italy He was the initiator of the National Association of Poor Peasants In fact, it was because he was the president of that Association that he was arrested again in 1925 He was to go on trial with a group of comrades, but the fascists could not fabricate convincing indictments against them Several days before the proclamation of the emergency laws which placed all Italian political parties and independent organisations of the working people under a ban, the authorities had to let Di Vittorio out provisionally, and on the advice of the Party, he went to France In impotent fury the fascist "special tribunal" set up for the express purpose of hounding Communists sentenced Di Vittorio, in absentia, to twelve years' imprisonment

Mario Nicoletti (the name by which Di Vittorio was now known in the Party) was soon a popular figure in the small democratic colony of Italians residing in France He took a leading part in the anti fascist movement among the Italian emigrants but his main concern remained the Italian trade union movement He was the head of the foreign centre of the General Confederation of Labour uniting Socialists and Communists

Inasmuch as that organisation was banned in fascist Italy, the foreign centre played an exceptionally important role in directing the strike action of the working people inside Italy, which was not suppressed by the proscription of all strikes

The outbreak of strikes continued throughout Italy, often culminating in the satisfaction of the workers' economic demands This strike action kept alive the class solidarity of the working people and their faith in the possibility of combating and defeating fascism.

It was at this period of his life that Di Vittorio began to participate in the work of a number of international democ ratic organisations Between 1928 and 1930, he represented the peasant unions of Italy at the sessions of the International of Red Peasant Unions In 1930, Nicoletti Di Vittorio was co opted to the Central Committee of the Italian Com munist Party, and in 1931, elected a member of its Political Bureau

Working in emigration, under great difficulties, di Vittorio and the Party pressed the fight against Italian fascism and its brutal attack on defenceless Ethiopia, against Ger man and Italian war plans and for collective security in Europe

In 1936, fascist Italy and nazi Germany openly intervened in the Spanish civil war There, beyond the Pyrenees Moun tains, the forces of the revolutionary anti fascist movement first met in open combat with fascism, setting the stage for a second world war Upon the outcome of the national revolu tionary struggle of the Spanish people depended the peace as well as the fate of the entire working class and democratic movement of Western Europe Sizing up the situation and being true to their internationalist duty, the Communists took it upon themselves to organise a worldwide movement of solidarity with the heroic Spanish people The highest form which that movement attained, the International Brigade— was one of the noblest undertakings of the international com munist movement, one of the most striking examples in its history of proletarian internationalism in practice Thousands upon thousands of Communists became soldiers of the war against fascism Mario Nicoletti set foot on Spanish soil in September 1936, arriving along with the earliest freedom fighters The trade union organiser became a commissar in the legendary 1st (11th) International Brigade In the grim fighting of November 1936 near Madrid, the Brigade made its heroic stand against the main direction of the fascist army Hundreds of European anti fascists laid

Giuseppe Di Vittorio in Spain with his fellow International Brigaders

down their lives in the heavy fighting of the Brigade that stemmed the enemy drive That was the first military victory of the international democratic forces over fascism the promise of the victories they would later score in the fighting at Moscow, on the Volga, in the Resistance of the planting of the Red Flag over the Reichstag Along with the battalions of the 5th Regiment and the Soviet tank and aviation forces, the International Brigade and its men, commanders and commissars played a signal role in that victory Then, for months afterwards, commissar Nicoletti participated in the renewed fighting around Madrid and took a very active part in the creation of the Albacete centre of the international units Soon, however, the further development of the anti fascist struggle called Di Vittorio back to Paris

The long years of the fight against fascism had convinced Italian democrats that unity of all progressive forces of the nation was essential to the defeat of fascism The example of Spain confirmed that belief In this period the Italian Communists and Socialists did indeed achieve unity of action

Democrats of the most divergent political views fought side by side against world fascism in the International Brigade on Spanish soil

In 1937, the Rosselli brothers, editors of the Italian anti fascist newspaper *La Voce degli Italiani* (Voice of the Italians) were murdered in cold blood by Italian fascists Di Vittorio was made the director of that daily, which spoke for the Italian People's Alliance, as the organisation of Italian emigrants living in France was called Its more than 100,000 members included anti fascists of diverse political beliefs

But the important thing was that it brought together all Italian democrats *La Voce degli Italiani* exposed the plans of the Berlin Rome axis for military aggression in Europe and the connivance of the French and British governments with the fascists It called on Italian democrats to help revolutionary Spain and informed the world of the fascists crimes in Italy

After the beginning of the Second World War, the French government intensified its persecution of the Italian anti-fascists Di Vittorio had to continue his work under illegal conditions During the nazi occupation of France, Di Vittorio s wife Anita and his daughter Baldina were sent to a concentration camp, while his 17 year old son Vindice found his way to the guerillas in Holland, distinguished himself in action was wounded, and later was made a captain in the French army

Early in 1941, the nazis succeeded in apprehending Di Vittorio After several months in various German prisons, he was turned over to the Italian fascist government He was

igain jailed, and then deported to the Ventotene Island near Naples Many Italian anti fascists (Communists, Socialists and Catholics), people of diverse views but the same hatred for fascism were serving sentences on that island Di Vitto rio continued his political work there immersing himself in his books, discussing them with experienced Communist leaders like Luigi Longo, Scoccimarro and Li Causi, and working with the other exiles

The fascist regime in Italy collapsed on the 25th of July, 1943 Upon his release from exile Di Vittorio received a government appointment as the General Commissioner of the National Agricultural Federation, a former fascist cor poration which he was instructed to reorganise But on September 8 the German army occupied the part of Italy not held by the British and American forces, and Di Vittorio had to go underground in German occupied Rome The Germans started round ups with the help of the Italian police one night an Italian patrol stopped Di Vittorio, but when he explained to the commander of the patrol who he was, the man let him go

Di Vittorio's chief task at this time was to strengthen and extend the scope of working class unity In the course of his underground work he met trade union representatives of different political trends, including the Socialists and Christian Democrats Their lengthy negotiations resulted in the conclusion of a pact on trade union unity with represen tatives of the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats The context of the pact, to which Di Vittorio affixed his signature on behalf of the Communist Party of Italy on June 3, 1944, was not made public until after the liberation of Rome At last the split in the Italian trade union movement was healed, and instead of the former Red and reactionary unions, whose competition and lack of cooperation had facilitated the fascists' ascent to power, there now appeared a single anti fascist trade union centre which united all the Italian work ing people It was also decided that workers in each branch

of industry or agriculture should have their own trade union.

It was the unity of the Italian people in the fight against fascism that won them victory. The big uprising which swept all of northern Italy in April 1945 liberated the country. The Italian working-class and communist movements entered a new phase of their development. The new conditions called for new forms of the struggle for the same vital goals.

Now it was essential to consolidate democratic unity, to expand the mass movement of the working people, to organise them. Guerilla commanders were made secretaries of trade unions.

Fully aware of the importance of unity to the complete extermination of the hangovers of fascism in the country and to its progress in the direction of democracy and socialism, the Communist and Socialist Parties firmly implemented a policy of strengthening and extending the unity of the progressive forces of the country following its liberation. The basis for such unity still existed in the closely knit anti-fascist organisations which had arisen during the period of hostilities. It became more important than ever to ensure the genuine cohesion of the trade union movement.

Thanks to his tremendous prestige, Di Vittorio was elected one of the three general secretaries of the Italian General Confederation of Labour. The 1st Congress of that Confederation in January 1945, before the total liberation of Italy, unanimously endorsed his election to the post. Di Vittorio was also a member of the Consultative Assembly; he was elected to the Constituent Assembly and then to the parliaments of all convocations. He repeatedly represented the Confederation of Labour at the sessions of parliament and its various commissions.

When in September 1945 the World Trade Union Congress met in Paris, Di Vittorio led the Italian delegation and in recognition of the role and importance of the Italian trade

union movement was elected a member of the Leading Committee and vice president of the World Federation of Trade Unions

As soon as the Communist Party regained its legal status in 1943, Di Vittorio was appointed to a leading post in the Party From then on he was invariably elected to its Central Committee and executive bodies

Di Vittorio had a big part in drafting the constructive programme of action adopted by the Italian trade unions after the end of the war The proposals the unions put before the government dealt, on the one hand, with methods of improving the material conditions of the working people, and, on the other, with the speediest possible restoration of industry and of the entire economic life of the country The Italian Confederation of Labour suggested among other things that all persons working by hire be paid according to a sliding wage scale, so as to ensure the relative stability of real wages as far as possible Effective measures were also suggested for protecting the position of the share croppers and peasant landholders The principle of collective agreements between farm labourers and landowners was introduced The first agreement of that kind was concluded in Di Vittorio's home town of Cerignola In industry the so called internal committees were formed at all enterprises, these elected bodies, made up of workers, were vested with consultative powers in all questions affecting life inside the factories

In addition to these principles, the 1st Congress of the Italian General Confederation of Labour raised the following demands higher wages for the low income groups of workers, active participation by the trade unions in the determined fight against the black market, abolition of fascist labour laws, the drafting of a national plan of economic reconstruction of the country, nationalisation of a number of branches of industry, implementation of a radical land reform

The Congress of the Italian General Confederation of Labour endorsed the principle of trade union unity, and Di Vittorio was able to say proudly at this Congress For the first time in Italian history, Communist, Socialist, Catholic, Republican, Anarcho Syndicalist and non party workers are united What better proof can there be of the profound desire of the Italian working people for unity? ' And Di Vittorio added "The Italian General Confederation of Labour is the home of all the working people It was the integrating role of the Confederation, in fact, that made it such a great factor in Italian life

Italy's post war economic straits had dire consequences for the working people The employers especially those with fascist ties, frequently abandoned their enterprises or refused to expand production In such cases, the trade unions themselves had to take over, and through the managerial councils created in most factories ensure their normal functioning Many employers were dissatisfied with this democratic incursion and tried to manoeuvre mass dismissals of the workers on the pretext of a shortage of raw materials, or other fictive grounds The Confederation in return called for legal sanctions to make employers retain their usual labour force intact It stipulated that if necessary workers could be transferred to auxiliary jobs but could not be fired from the given factory That demand was satisfied by the government coalition which included representatives of the Communist and Socialist Parties By that measure it helped to restrain the growth of unemployment, which reached the dimensions of a national disaster in post war Italy Simultaneously it prevented sabotage by the employers who were deliberately keeping their factories from operating at full capacity The Confederation called for higher labour productivity in the factories with the proviso that the introduction of new machinery was not to lead to the dismissal of workers Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the employers' association, the Confederation sought to secure

better wage terms and labour legislation It also took an active part in the political life of the country, for instance, it supported the drive to bring the thousands of soldiers who had been interned as prisoners of war back into production, in that way return them to normal life, and so foil the reac tion's attempts to renew its fascist propaganda among them Thanks to Di Vittorio's persistence it achieved its end and took the ground from right under the feet of the fascist agi tators

April 1946 brought the referendum on the state system and the simultaneous elections to the Constituent Assembly The Confederation put all its weight behind the republic as against the monarchy Its activists, among them Di Vittorio, addressed numerous meetings After the proclamation of the republic the Confederation categorically repudiated the monarchists' attempts to ignore the results of the referendum The executive committee of the Confederation held an emer gency meeting and alerted workers all over the country to be ready for any moves in the direction of a monarchist putsch

Upon the establishment of the republic, the Confederation continued its calls for the speediest and fullest possible rehabilitation of the national economy, among other things by according legal recognition to the managerial councils But differences of opinion soon cropped up on these questions between the Communists and Socialists on the one hand, and the Demo Christians on the other The Italian bourgeoi sie, alarmed by the growing influence of the Communist and Socialist Parties on the masses, began even more openly to spurn the unity that had brought the country victory over fascism With the backing of the British and American occu pation authorities, the monopoly circles ousted from the leadership of the government after the war stepped up their efforts to regain power The bourgeoisie saw that one of the most potent democratic levers determining the course of life in the country was working class unity and unleashed a

deliberate campaign to cleave the Italian trade unions The Demo Christian leadership of the Confederation took to regularly voting down the proposals of the Communists and Socialists

In May 1947, after the trip of the leader of the Christian Democratic Party and Premier De Casperi to the United States the government coalition collapsed The first post war Italian government in which Communists or Socialists were not represented brought in its wake a period of incessant bourgeois attack on the Italian working class movement The Demo Christian trade union leaders tried to provoke a split in the Confederation with their argument that the structure of the unions must correspond to the structure of the government Di Vittorio led the fight to preserve the unity of the Confederation He exposed the fallacy of the argument that unity between Catholics and atheists was impossible " We are all brothers in that we all belong to the working class," he declared "We all have the same interests, the same needs and goals Trade union unity does not mean union between different classes, it is the union of one and the same class "

When their attempts to split the unions on religious grounds failed the Demo Christians demanded that the unions keep out of politics altogether After heated debates, faced by the workers, determination to defend trade union unity, the Demo Christians had to agree to the following point being written into the charter of the Confederation "The independence of the trade unions from political parties and the state does not mean that the unions shall be indifferent to all problems of a political nature The Italian General Confederation of Labour shall express its opinion on all political questions that concern not a particular party but all the working people (the achievement and expansion of the people's rights, social legislation, the economic restor ation and development of the country, etc), and support such measures as further the interests of the working people "

Di Vittorio pointed out that the failure to adhere to such a course would signify "failure of the trade unions to intervene in the affairs of the nation with the aim of frustrating all and any attempts at revenge by the reaction"

Thus another splintering move was defeated, and trade union unity was again upheld and even bolstered That year the Confederation was able, for that very reason, to push through the adoption of new rules for the internal factory committees and score an important gain for the working people in the fight against the arbitrary practices of the employers

The Christian Democratic Party managed to gain an abso lute majority in the parliamentary elections of April 18, 1948—with the blessings of the British and American authorities and the help of bribes and dishonest manipulations Once in control of all government key posts, the bourgeoisie decided to strike a deadly blow at the democratic forces of the country, smash the Communist and Socialist Parties by police methods, and weaken the class unity of the trade unions The Christian Democratic union bosses picked on any excuse to split the Confederation They opposed the protest strikes against the wholesale murders perpetrated by hired gangs at a meeting in Sicily sponsored by the Com munist Party, they came out against the general strike in Rome keynoted by the slogan of solidarity with the unem ployed

On July 14, 1948, an attempt was made on the life of Palmiro Togliatti, General Secretary of the Italian Commun ist Party That criminal act aroused the bitter indignation of all Italian toilers and democrats, and mass strikes broke out spontaneously up and down the country The Italian General Confederation of Labour joined in the popular protest, issuing a call for a general strike At first the Demo Christian union leaders participated in it, then they pro nounced the strike politically tainted and made that their

Di Vittorio speaking on behalf of trade union unity

excuse for walking out of the Confederation, thus disrupting the unity of that trade union organisation

Nevertheless the Italian General Confederation of Labour, which had elected Di Vittorio its General Secretary after the exodus of the Christian Democrats, continued to be the main trade union organisation of the Italian proletariat, affiliating considerably over half of the entire union membership of the country The top circles of the Italian bourgeoisie nursed the hope that the Communists and Socialists in the Confederation would start an overall fight to "destroy" the Catholic unions, a fight that would deepen the rift in the working class and lead to the general attrition of the Italian working class movement But the Confederation did not take the road hoped for by the reaction After a careful study of the situation and on the advice of the factory locals, Di Vittorio told a meeting of the Confederation's

National Council on October 5, 1948 "We are not going to get ourselves involved in a clash with the Catholic workers, and flatly refuse to regard even those who now side with the splitters as enemies We have no enemies or opponents among the working people They will always be welcomed in the family of the Confederation with feelings of fraternity and solidarity "

Confederation members who found themselves in the minority of their factory locals were advised to go on with their union work, take the lead in it and be active in the trade union struggle By that stand the Confederation greatly offset the negative effects the Italian bourgeoisie expected the split to have

Also in 1948, the Confederation was called upon to make a highly important decision and declare its stand on the Marshall Plan That operation of the U S ruling element aimed to restore the stranglehold of the monopolies on the countries of Western Europe It was sugar coated to look like a programme of aid to the war torn economies of those countries, deceive the working people, and win over all the petty bourgeoisie, who in Italy make up about a third of the total population

On behalf of the Confederation, Di Vittorio explained the attitude of the organised working class to the Marshall Plan

While he did not deny the importance of an aid pro gramme as such, and said it could be a necessary and benefi cial measure for the country, he noted that in its concrete form the Marshall Plan was designed to help definite social strata in Italy and so serve as a tool in the hands of the most reactionary elements For that reason the Confederation proposed to retain its complete freedom of action with regard to the Marshall Plan, and agreed to support those of its provisions which might prove beneficial to the working people, just as it would oppose any steps likely to strengthen the powers of the big bourgeoisie

The implementation of the Marshall Plan was accompanied in Italy, as in other West-European countries, by a monopoly offensive against the gains of the urban and rural proletariat The Confederation mounted a stubborn and for the most part successful resistance to that offensive It drew up its own plan for the economic development of the country which centred around the interests of the working people, and submitted that plan to the nation for its consideration Known as "The Labour Plan," this project envisaged the nationalisation of a number of industries, primarily the power industry, extensive land amelioration work combined with land reforms, the expansion of housing construction for the working people, and a big public works programme to curb unemployment The idea was for this plan to be financed by levies on the monopolies' super profits and by government investments But the government, persisting in its course of attacking the gains of the working people and drawing the country into the Atlantic Pact, replied by making the Confederation the butt of all kinds of discrimination Its activists were fired from their jobs, its branches were not recognised as representative organisations of the workers, and matters even reached a point where the government refused to give its leaders permits to leave the country Di Vittorio, for one, was refused a permit to go to New York, where he was to have represented the World Federation of Trade Unions in UNESCO

None the less, the Italian Confederation of Labour continued to lead the workers' strike action, and with success As before, Di Vittorio was the most popular trade union leader in the country The Confederation opposed the closure of industrial enterprises and organised "back to work" strikes, it led the peasants who took over the idle estates and the unemployed who at their own initiative began to build roads, bridges and the like The government resorted to force in an attempt to crush the activity of the masses The scale and ferocity of the class battles of the period can

be judged by the fact that 62 people were killed and 3,126 wounded in clashes between the police and workers in the space of two and a half years (1948 1950), 92,000 people were arrested and brought to trial, and 19,906 people sentenced to varying prison terms in the same period

The Italian working class movement came through the test of those trying years with honour

In 1953, the Confederation and its activists helped to defeat a vicious law by means of which the Italian bourgeoisie hoped to stage what would amount to a coup and turn Parliament into an obedient tool The trade unions played a big role in the development of the countrywide peace movement Di Vittorio was elected a member of the World Peace Council

A rather new situation shaped up in the Italian economy during 1955 and 1956, when a number of industrial giants fitted out with the latest technical advances sprang up in the north of the country It being a time when demand was high, the new plants were in a position to give "their own" workers certain hand outs The FIAT concern's plants in Turin, for instance, paid the highest wages in the country The owners of these modern enterprises seemed of their own volition to be satisfying the very demands the workers had previously fought so hard for But by simultaneously persecuting the Confederation's union spokesmen, the managers of FIAT's plants succeeded in practically pushing out the union locals Opportunistic moods became widespread among the workers Some union leaders began to doubt the very possibility of waging the struggle on any scale or with any success at enterprises of the FIAT type And it was true that the attempt to apply the old methods did not produce the desired results That almost seemed to justify the gloomy forecasts of the dogmatists and sectarians who said that as the workers' living standard rose the class struggle was bound to slacken, and that revolutionary struggle was ruled out in the highly developed capitalist countries during

periods of boom and under conditions of peaceful coexistence between states with different social and political systems

Pointing out the prospects of the development of the democratic and socialist revolutions under conditions of peaceful coexistence, the Communist Party of Italy dismissed such conjectures

To further the search for new paths and forms of struggle, the Communists made a profound study of the situation on a countrywide scale and also at the industrial giants themselves

A special conference of all Communists employed at such enterprises was convened for the purpose It was attended by communist trade union functionaries as well as many Socialists After a careful, all round analysis of the problem new forms and methods of trade union work in the modern enterprises were recommended These recommendations received their final redaction at a second conference along the same lines

The conference exposed the allegations of the Right Socialists that the character of capitalism had changed and that it had become a rational, well nigh a socialist system

It stressed that the unions' attempts to resist the introduction of new machinery or improvements in labour organisation and production were ill advised and bound to get them nowhere They ran counter to the inherent laws of the development of modern production Trade union functionaries were therefore advised to work out new methods of struggle and new demands that would guarantee the workers' interests and social progress at this time, when simple slogans like higher wages or shorter hours could no longer rally the workers The conference and with it the Confederation pointed out that even in modern production there remained the vital tasks of defending the workers' democratic rights freedom for the trade unions and political parties to function inside the plants without interference, recognition

of the unions' rights to conclude collective agreements embracing all questions bearing on relations between the enterprise and the workers, in order to keep the employers from deliberately discriminating against one or another group of workers

Subsequent events in Italy bore out the correctness of this fundamental approach The slight weakening in the trade union movement attendant on both the new conditions in the large plants and the passing flare of opportunistic influences was corrected The militancy of the unions was fully restored Strike action assumed an unprecedented scale, becoming a major factor in the general offensive con ducted by the revolutionary and democratic forces of the country from 1959 to 1963 A simultaneous process was the gradual restoration of united action by workers organised in different trade unions After years of trying to deepen the rift (especially from 1953 to 1958) in the working class movement by means of the crudest sort of anti communism and anti Sovietism, the Demo Christian union leaders were obliged, early in the sixties, to concede the demands of the rank and file in the Christian Democratic unions and agree more and more often to united action with the workers affiliated with the Italian General Confederation of Labour Although this result did not make itself wholly apparent until after Di Vittorio's death, the credit for bringing it about belongs to him

He also made an inestimable contribution to the unity and consolidation of the world trade union movement

The World Federation of Trade Unions was an organi sation of all the working people It took in the trade unions of the USSR, the people's democracies, the United States, Britain, France, Italy and many other countries After the western powers started the cold war against the socialist countries, attempts were made to split the WFTU The first such serious attempt took the form of the American and British union leaders' demand that the WFTU uncondition

ally endorse the notorious Marshall Plan As the vice president of the Federation, Di Vittorio had a great deal to do with the ultimate rejection of that demand by the WFTU

The unity of the WFTU was also brought under attack when the international trades and vocational centres began to be formed, and the splitters tried to seat the old lead ers of the compromise unions in the saddle again To counter that manoeuvre, Di Vittorio suggested that representative conferences of the different trades be called together to settle on the rules and regulations and choose the leaders of the centres in a democratic way The union bosses of the United States, Britain and Holland turned down his propos al without an explanation, and early in 1949 announced their break with the World Federation and establishment of the splinter International Confederation of Free Unions

At the 2nd Congress of the WFTU held in Milan in July 1949, Di Vittorio was elected the chairman of the World Federation of Trade Unions, a position he held until his death Under his leadership, the WFTU fought energetically for the preservation and consolidation of peace and growing solidarity between all the working people and the Soviet people, against all the crises in international relations in stigated by the imperialist circles, against the resurgence of revanchism and militarism in West Germany, against aggressive military political alliances like NATO and SEATO Simultaneously the WFTU worked unceasingly for the restoration of trade union unity on a world scale Many of the trade unions of the countries that gained their political independence during this period joined the WFTU, which remains the largest international trade union organisation to this day

This teeming activity, long years of underground work and imprisonment and Di Vittorio's striving always to assist at decisions of the most important questions of the Italian and international working class movement combined to undermine his health In 1955, he was found to be suffering

Di Vittorio with his grand daughter Sylvia

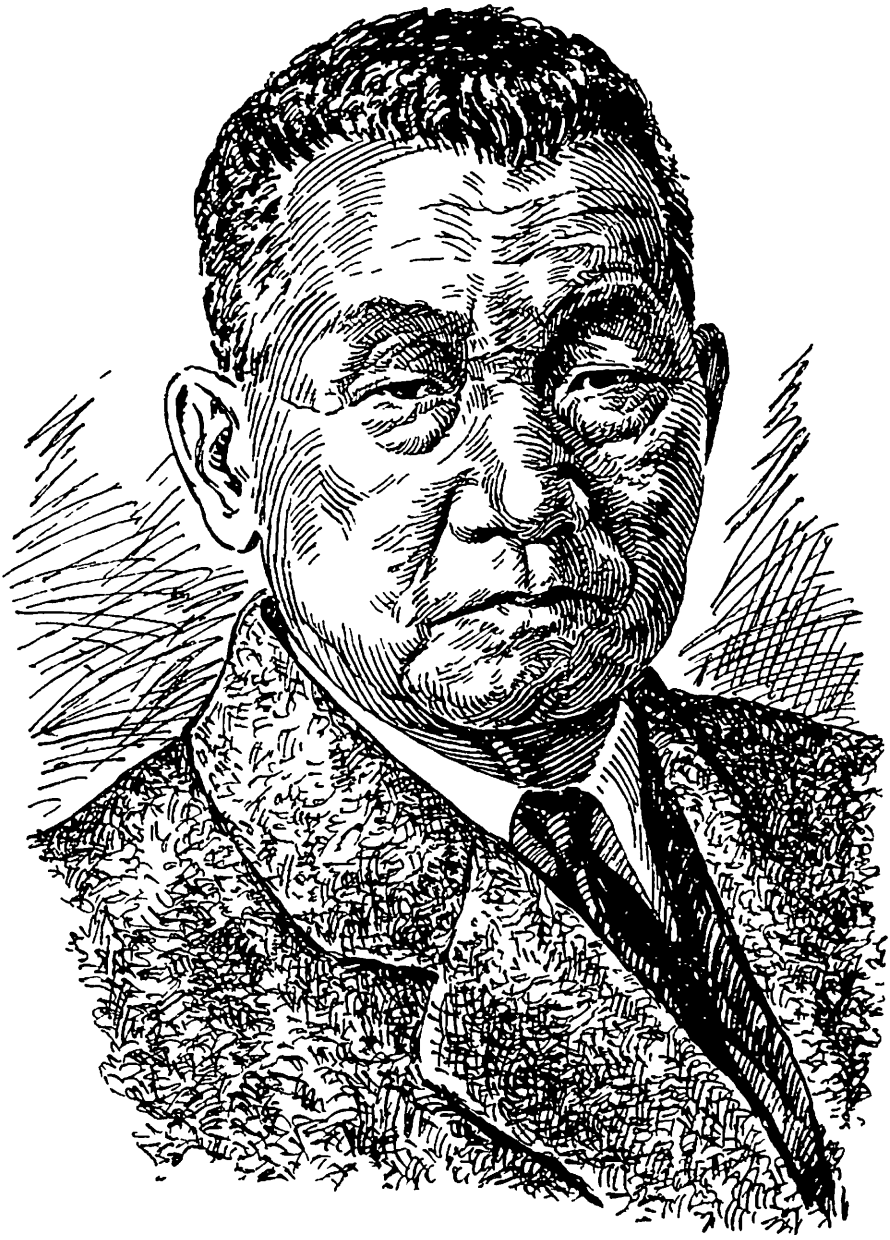
from a serious heart disease But he had no thought of giving up his work, he could not see life without struggle

On November 3, 1957, Di Vittorio went to the small town of Lecco in the north of Italy to attend the opening of the new Labour Office built on funds contributed by the work ing people As usual, he made a speech there In the evening he was to have spoken again at a city meeting But that very day a heart attack cut short the life of Giuseppo Di Vittorio, wonderful Italian patriot and militant leader of the Italian and international working class movement, outstanding trade union organiser and brilliant orator

All the working people of the world bowed their heads in grief and tribute to the departed leader

The maxim of Di Vittorio's life is found in his last speech, at Lekko, when he said "Let us always be united and fight unitedly!"

In looking back at Di Vittorio's difficult but glorious life let us say with him, as he said on another occasion 'Always remember that our cause is a just and inspiring cause, that it is the cause of universal progress, the cause of human civilisation, the cause of justice for the people—a cause worth serving!"



Sen Katayama

Sen Katayama

To devote myself to the revolution and communism, such is the meaning of my life If I cannot work for the cause of communism I do not want to live '

Sen Katayama

The Russo Japanese war was at its height General Nogi's army had Port Arthur under siege and was about to storm the fortress General Kuropatkin was gathering troops at Liaoyang for a crucial battle In both countries militaristic propaganda was whipping up a murky wave of chauvinism among the more backward elements of the population

On August 14, 1904, the 6th Congress of the Second International met at Amsterdam, Holland After the opening ceremony, the chairman drew the delegates' attention to the fact that the Russian Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov and the Japanese Sen Katayama, Socialists of the countries at war with each other, had been elected vice chairmen Plekhanov and Katayama rose and shook hands in token of the friendship of the Russian and Japanese workers The audience broke into stormy applause The ovation continued as Plekhanov and Katayama turned towards their seats, and they repeated the handshake To the loud cheers of the

delegates Plekhanov embraced and kissed the Japanese Socialist

That day Katayama made a stirring anti militarist speech at the Congress It was translated into German by Clara Zetkin and into French by Rose Luxemburg It inspired the Congress resolution expressing deep sympathy for the common people of both lands, who were the victims of the capitalist system and the criminal war policy of the Japanese and tsarist governments This demonstration of proletarian solidarity at Amsterdam had great international repercussions Sen Katayama's name was flashed across the front pages of the European newspapers

The symbolic handshake at the Congress of the Second International created a great stir in Japan "Our readers will agree that this handshake is most significant It will go down in the annals of the world socialist movement, for it is not merely that a certain Katayama has clasped the hand of a certain Plekhanov, but that the Socialist Parties of Japan and Russia have exchanged a handshake through their envoys " wrote the progressive *Heimin Shimbun* (Popular Gazette)

This was the newspaper which had from the outset taken a firm stand against the war and on March 13, 1904, had published a manifesto "To the Socialist Party of Russia" stressing the mutual interests of the Japanese and Russian proletariat in the fight against their common foe and urging joint opposition to the war "To the Socialists there is no barrier of race, territory or nationality," the Manifesto ran, "we are all comrades, brothers and sisters, and have no reason to fight each other Your enemy is not the Japanese people but our militarism and so called patriotism Nor is our enemy the Russian people, but your militarism and so called patriotism "

On May Day 1904, holiday of international proletarian solidarity, *Iskra* published a reply "This Manifesto is a document of *historic* importance," said *Iskra* "If we Russian

Social Democrats know only too well with what difficulties we are confronted in time of war we must bear in mind that far more difficult is the position of our Japanese com rades who at a moment when national feeling was at its highest pitch extended their hands to us Amid the jingoi stic chorus of both countries, their voice sounds as a herald from that better world which, though it exists today only in the mind of the class conscious proletariat, will become a reality tomorrow " *Heimin Shimbun* printed the full text of the *Iskra* reply

Fraternal contacts between the proletariat of Russia and Japan were thus established and developed nearly sixty years back And the noble international traditions of the Japanese working class took root

The Early Years

A second son whom he named Sugataro was born to the peasant Kunihei Koyo on December 3, 1859, in the moun tain village of Hadeki (Mimasaka province) in southern Honshu (now part of the Yuge settlement, Kumecho Dis trict, Okayama prefecture) According to Japanese custom the father's property is not inherited by younger sons Therefore, the mother, knowing her family to be without heirs, desired the child to bear her maiden name of Yabuki *

When Sugataro was four years old, his father took the monastic vows He was brought up by his great grandfather, Kichizaemon, a just and intelligent man who for over sixty years, as the local headman, had courageously defended the peasants' interests, thereby earning their high regard His great grandfather had a strong influence on the boy

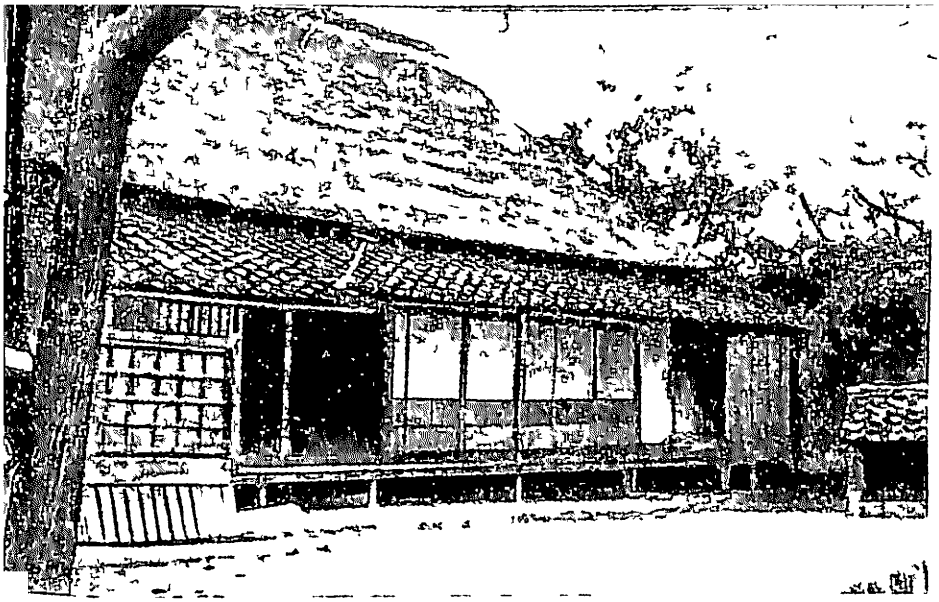
* To escape military conscription, Sugataro Yabuki was legally adopted in 1878 and became the heir of Ikutaro Katayama, a childless peasant woman in the village of Kamime Later, in 1895 he changed his first name to Sen

Sugataro's childhood years were spent under the Tokugawa feudal regime From an early age, the boy observed and experienced injustice, cruelty and oppression In 1868, 1869 and 1873 he saw the peasants of his own and neighbouring villages, driven to desperation by the abuses of the local authorities, rise up against their oppressors Sugataro's older brother and uncle took part in the peasant disturbances of 1873 His brother served almost a year in prison These pictures of his childhood imprinted themselves on the boy's mind and affected his outlook

The boy's traditional schooling began when he was seven Priests of the local Shinto temples taught him to write and to read the ancient books Cramming unintelligible texts only repelled the boy and he made little progress in his studies

A few years later, when he managed to enroll in a nearby newly opened primary school of the European type, he became so absorbed in the subjects that he was soon at the top of the class But he had to discontinue his studies after attending the school for no more than 100 days, his brother was imprisoned and his mother needed his help The thirst for learning whetted at that school remained Busy as he was from morning till night performing hard peasant chores, he continued his self education with amazing tenacity and such good results that in the autumn of 1877 the primary school master in the village of Yuge took him on as his assistant to teach the first forms In the following year, quitting his home for the first time in his life, he accepted a similar appointment at another school Now he was completely on his own To fill in the gaps in his own training, he decided to undertake a systematic course of study and in 1880 entered the teachers' seminary at Okayama Here he had his first experience of collective action when he joined a students' strike for better meals

After a year at the seminary, young Katayama made up his mind to go to Tokyo in search of both work and further



The house where Sen Katayama was born

knowledge Times were hard First he worked as press man apprentice at the Sekibun sha printing establishment, learned to be a type setter, and afterwards did other jobs For three years, going hungry, working ten hours a day with only two days off a month, he devoted his evenings and nights to his books and notebooks and doggedly made inroads into the most diverse fields of scholarship

This was the time when Sen Katayama became increasing ly aware of the necessity of fighting for a change in the existing order and a better future for the Japanese people He was inspired by the example of the noble leaders of the Meiji* revolution whose lives he had read in the historical works of his teacher R Oka "A spirit of protest against the existing state of things was awakened in me," Katayama wrote in his *Autobiography* "Just as the men of the period of the revolution resented the despotism of Tokugawa, I resented the aggressiveness of the government Moreover I

* Uncompleted bourgeois revolution of 1867 1868

began to dream of revolutionary activities I was carried away by the romance of the revolutionary epoch Its leaders rose before me in a halo of self-sacrifice and valour and, idealising them, I was dismayed to see how poorly the ruling bureaucratic clique compared to them "

In the hope of continuing his education and better equipping himself for the struggles ahead, Sen Katayama left for the United States in November 1884 He arrived there with hardly a cent in his pockets, and in the more than twelve years he lived there worked at every manner of job—laundryman, janitor, dish-washer, farm labourer, cook, type setter Unemployment, hunger and the indignities to which the rabid racists subjected him marred the days of the "coloured immigrant" Having himself experienced the horrors of racial discrimination he remained a lifelong friend and champion of the American Negro

Sen Katayama's iron will helped him overcome numerous odds

In 1892, he took his Bachelor's degree at Grinnel College, then his Master's He interested himself seriously in social problems, seeking for ways of struggle to better the lot of the workers During a three months' stay in England, which he visited with a group of students in the spring of 1894, Katayama became more closely acquainted with the British working class movement and met its leaders, among them Tom Mann, John Burns and Keir Hardie He and Tom Mann remained steadfast friends

On returning to the United States, Sen Katayama again took any job he could get to enable him to further his education In 1895, he completed a course at Yale University where, by his own admission, he engaged solely in the study of social problems At last, in 1896, he returned to Japan

Sen Katayama in the United States

Organiser and Leader of the Working-Class and Communist Movement in Japan

Japanese industry at this time was developing at a fe verish pace As the number of hired workers multiplied, a mo dern proletariat came into being The first labour organisa tions appeared The political views of their leaders were often very confused

Katayama began his political activities in his native land with the publication of a number of articles on sociological problems and the workers' struggle in other lands for their rights In the summer of 1897, with the assistance of the reverend D C Greene Doctor of Theology, he established an educa tional institution called Kingsley Kan (Kingsley Hall) in Tokyo Dr Greene meant this to be a Christian charity estab lishment and Katayama, who had not yet lost his illusions with respect to such undertakings, agreed to work with him Soon, however, he was convinced that the plight of the workers could not be alleviated by any such means When differences arose between him and Greene, the latter with drew his financial support of Kingsley Kan I who had gone through the school of adversity, studying for the few coppers I could earn, Katayama wrote afterwards, "was irresistibly attracted by the labour question and this after wards led me to grow entirely absorbed in the working class movement which became the cause of my life " Activi ties at Kingsley Kan underwent a marked change Lectures were delivered on social problems A workers' night school was opened, English courses started, and a youth club organ ised On holidays there were workers' gatherings at which political talks were given Even a kindergarten for the children of working women was set up Katayama headed all these many sided activities Much of his time was devoted to edu cational work among the workers of the neighbouring plants,

such as the Koichikawa munition works, the Akabane arsenal and the Navy yards

In 1897, a wave of strikes rocked Japan The workers began to organise and set up their trade unions In July, Fusataro Takano and Sen Katayama organised a Society for the Promotion of Trade Unions (Rodo Kumiai Kiseikai) Katayama and his comrades travelled to industrial towns calling upon the workers to organise And they gained considerable success On December 1, 1897, the Iron Workers' Union (Tekko Kumiai) was set up with over 1,000 members This was the occasion for a large public meeting and the publication of the first number of *Rodo Sekai* (Labour World), which became the organ of the Iron Workers' Union and the Society for the Promotion of Trade Unions Sen Katayama was the editor of this first printed workers' newspaper of Japan It contained a page of labour news in English which made the *Rodo Sekai* a valuable source of information on the labour movement in Japan to the outside world

To be sure there had been earlier attempts to organise the masses They were made by the Left wing leaders of the bourgeois liberal movement for freedom and the people's democratic rights (Dziyu Minken Undo) But Sen Katayama alone urged the organisation of labour associations under the leadership of the working class

Katayama continued his profound study of social problems Convinced that socialism alone was the correct teach ing, he became in 1898 one of the organisers of the Society for the Study of Socialism (Shakaishugi Kenkyukai)

In 1900 the Socialist Association (Shakaishugi Kyokai) was organised with Katayama prominent in its activities It held many workers' rallies and meetings and contributed substantially to the spread of socialist ideas thus paving the way for the organisation of a social democratic party in Japan Gradually the workers' paper *Rodo Sekai*, edited by Katayama, began to propagate the ideas of socialism On May Day 1900, it carried an article entitled "Social Reforms

and Revolution " The *Rikugo Zasshi* (Universe), a progressive magazine, published "Capital and Its Author K Marx", an article by Sen Katayama At much the same time Kataya ma put out his booklet "Socialism to Me" predicting the inevitable clash between labour and capital and stressing the importance of organising a social democratic party in Japan

At the first election to the Imperial Diet, held in 1890, owing to electoral qualifications and other restrictions, the number of voters did not exceed one per cent of the popu lation a situation which led to the rise of a widespread movement for universal suffrage Katayama was active in this movement and in 1899 was elected secretary of the Union of Struggle for Universal Suffrage (Futsu Senkyo Kisei Domeikai)

Katayama, son of a peasant, himself born in a feudal village, who joined the ranks of the proletariat and experien ced all the harshness of capitalist exploitation, emerged at the close of the last century, after a long period of seek ings as a noted leader of the Japanese working class move ment and propagandist of socialist ideas His activities won him worldwide recognition, in 1900, the Congress of the Second International at Paris voted him by proxy into the Bureau of its Executive Committee

In May 1901, Sen Katayama took part in the first attempt to found the Social Democratic Party of Japan (Shakai Minshu to) Although its platform was extremely moderate ("struggle within the limit of the law") the Party was at once banned

In 1903 and 1904, Sen Katayama contributed to the newspaper *Heimin Shimbun*, then the focal point of all pro gressive social thought in Japan While Japanese imperia lism was preparing for war against tsarist Russia, Sen Katayama and his comrades made propaganda tours to convince the Japanese people that such a war would gain them nothing but suffering, death and destruction

After returning from the Congress of the Second International at Amsterdam, Katayama redoubled his anti war activities

When the Russo Japanese war broke out, the position of the workers became so much worse that uprisings flared up in a number of areas They were, beyond doubt given impetus by the Russian revolution of 1905 All the more pressing was the necessity of organising a party of the work ers In February 1906, with the participation of Sen Kataya ma, the Japan Socialist Party (Nippon Shakaito) was formed In the main, it retained the moderate platform of the Social Democratic Party which had been outlawed in 1901 Katayama was elected to the Central Executive Committee of the new party

From June 1907 until August 1911 Sen Katayama was editor of *Shakai Shimbun*, a weekly newspaper propagating socialist ideas Citing concrete examples of the outrageous exploitation and oppression of the workers, the newspaper did its best to awaken the class consciousness of the workers and point up the need for joining trade unions and fighting to change the existing order of society In one year alone—from June 1907 till June 1908—forty five issues of this paper featured twenty one articles by Katayama In that time the newspaper organised seventy eight meetings in Tokyo, the members of its staff made one hundred and fifty trips to the provinces addressing meetings and Katayama almost always among them

When reformist and anarcho syndicalist tendencies became pronounced in the socialist ranks, Sen Katayama recognised the danger they presented to the movement He criticised Kotoku for underestimating the importance of political and organisational work among the masses and of the struggle for their everyday interests, and also for his adventuristic slogans of "direct action" to destroy the capitalist class, "an immediate general strike" and "rejection of participa tion in parliamentary elections"

Alarmed by the rising wave of the labour and socialist movement, the reaction swung into attack Twelve of the defendants brought to trial in 1910 on a trumped up charge of plotting to assassinate the Emperor were executed among them Kotoku and Suniko Isoo Abe Labour organisations were unrelentingly hounded The *Shakai Shimbun*, the only socialist newspaper in the country limited now to a single monthly issue continued to publish Katayama s articles on scientific socialism In March 1911, as editor of the *Shakai Shimbun*, Katayama was taken severely to task for printing a lengthy review of *The Denial of Christ*, a posthumously published work by Kotoku The paper had to be closed

But Katayama was a steadfast fighter whom neither terror nor repressions could intimidate Late in 1911 he organised a strike of Tokyo s street car workers who demanded a New Year bonus to supplement their wages On January 1, 1912 not a single street car could be seen running in Tokyo The strike which lasted several days, involved six thousand workers All its organisers were later arrested and arraigned before court The infuriated prosecutor demanded the heaviest penalty for Sen Katayama saying he was as 'dangerous as a tiger in sheep s clothing"

Sen Katayama and sixty of his comrades received prison sentences The nine months Katayama spent in solitary confinement at the Chiba prison were a severe ordeal 'In the Chiba prison I experienced many dismal moments," he recalled afterwards 'Late at night the warders would drag one of the prisoners to the torture chamber and beat him with bamboo canes or flog him with whips At first he screamed very loudly, but after a while his cries grew fainter and became hardly audible " In prison Katayama continued to study Marx s *Capital* and began to write his *Autobiography* which he revised and supplemented in later years (1930 1931)

After his release from prison Katayama was in point of fact barred from all political and literary activities "I

was treated like a most dangerous person," he recalled, "my every step was watched, making it utterly impossible for me to take further part in the labour movement ' He knew that at any moment he was liable to be re arrested and then most likely murdered in prison In 1914, he reluctantly left Japan again and went abroad

While abroad he maintained the closest ties with the socialist and labour movement in Japan In the United States he was extremely active in the Japanese community, organised socialist groups and until the middle of the year 1919 published *Heimin* (a Japanese newspaper)

Sen Katayama also kept in close touch with the Russian emigrants who were members of the Russian Social Demo cratic Labour Party, among them V Volodarsky, A M Kollontai and L K Martens From them he learned of the conferences at Zimmervald and Kintal He carried on wide anti war propaganda and was active in the Left wing socialist movement of the United States After the Commu nist International was formed he plunged zealously into its work and helped to found the Communist Parties of the United States, Mexico and Canada

"The son of a land in which a monarchist band, land owners and capitalists are constantly riding on the backs of the workers presumably in the name of the national inter ests," the Presidium of the Comintern Executive wrote of him in its obituary, "Sen Katayama has always been an un flinching and selfless fighter for proletarian internationalism Wherever fortune cast him, he at once addressed himself to the masses with a message of mortal hatred for capital and international unity of all proletarians "

Sen Katayama joyously hailed the Great October Socialist Revolution

His paper, *Heimin*, advocated support of the Russian revolution and later resolutely condemned foreign in tervention in the Soviet Far East Eager to study and spread the experience of the Great October Revolution,

Katayama translated Lenin's *The State and Revolution* into the Japanese language

He arrived in Soviet Russia on December 14, 1921, finding here ample scope for his zealous activities Five days later, on December 19, he greeted the 11th All Russia Conference of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks on behalf of the Comintern And shortly afterwards, in January 1922 he made a speech at the 1st Congress of the Communist and Revolutionary Organisations of the Far East on the political and economic situation and the development of the labour movement in Japan Katayama spoke of the tremendous influence of the October Revolution It was under its direct impact, he said, that such mass risings of the Japanese workers peasants and city poor as the rice riots, involving nearly ten million persons, had broken out in August and September of 1918

He stressed that the proletarians of Korea, Mongolia, Java and Japan, who had sent delegations to this Congress, realised what folly it would be to wipe out each other in a new imperialist war

Sen Katayama attached tremendous importance to anti war propaganda among the Japanese soldiers recruited for intervention in the Far East This propaganda vigorously promoted by the Japanese Socialists, yielded tangible results Early in 1920 an entire Japanese company sent to Pervaya Rechka (near Vladivostok) defied the officers' orders, the soldiers ripping off their shoulder straps and pinning red ribbons on instead, for this they were hustled aboard the armoured cruiser *Mikasa* and shot at sea It was not unusual, in other areas, for Japanese soldiers to go over to the side of the Red Army

In May and June 1922, Katayama toured Siberia, spending about a week in Chita and writing leaflets in which he called upon the Japanese soldiers to stop fighting against the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia The ardent, simply worded leaflets struck home and beyond doubt

Sen Katayama in Moscow, 1922

Sen Katayama at the VI Comintern Congress

promoted fomentation in the Japanese interventionist army

The October Revolution gave powerful impetus to the growth of the socialist movement in Japan Several communist groups appeared Out of these groups the Communist Party of Japan was formed at an Inaugural Congress held clandestinely in Tokyo on July 15, 1922 Sen Katayama was one of the organisers of the Communist Party of Japan as well as its recognised leader To the very last days of his life he represented that Communist Party in the Comintern Executive

Though living far from his native land, Sen Katayama continued to identify himself with the life and struggle of the Japanese working class He carefully read the papers

and magazines and all his mail from Japan, he had long chats with visiting comrades Important educational work was carried on by him among the students of the Japanese department at the Communist University of the Workers of the East, and he established contacts with Japanese living in the United States and other lands

Articles by Katayama and letters from him appeared regularly in *Sekki* (Red Banner) illegal organ of the Com munist Party of Japan Here is what he wrote in one of his last letters printed in this paper in August 1932 "Not for a single day do I forget the Japan of the oppressed and the disinherited I never lose sight of the struggle you are car rying on under the leadership of the Communist Party, the only party of the proletariat which is exerting every effort to overthrow the landowners and capitalists and build a Soviet Japan "

While working in the Comintern, Sen Katayama made a searching study of the progressive experience of the inter national working class and communist movement, as well as the revolutionary traditions and lessons of the struggle of the Japanese proletariat, and he applied that experience to consolidate the Communist Party of Japan He was adept at integrating the tasks of the Communist Party of Japan with the general tasks confronting the international com munist movement From day to day he guided the activities of the Japanese Communist Party along the Marxist Leninist road, extending the international contacts of the Japanese workers All important Comintern documents on Japan were framed with his direct participation It was with good rea son that the newspaper *Sekki* called him "father of the work ing class and socialist movement in Japan"

Indomitable Fighter Against War and Fascism

Sen Katayama was elected to the Comintern Executive in November 1922 and then to its Presidium, of which he remained a member to the day of his death Simultaneously he carried on prodigious work at the Profintern and the International Labour Defence He was in the vanguard of the fight against colonialism identifying himself pre emi nently with the struggle of the peoples of the East, and first and foremost the Japanese, Chinese and Korean peoples, for their national and social emancipation The following words from his article "Japan and the Coming Revolution", written in 1921, ring more prophetically today than ever

The collapse of Japanese imperialism will accrue to the advantage of the Japanese proletariat as well as to the Koreans and the Chinese And the eradication of imperia lism in the British dominions is in the interests of a consi derably larger mass of nationalities and races The freedom and life of Mexicans, Negroes, the inhabitants of Cuba, Haiti, San Domingo the Philippines and Central America depend upon the collapse of American imperialism"

In his address at the 5th Congress of the Comintern, on June 25, 1924, Katayama stressed the necessity of the proletariat in the metropolitan, colonial and dependent countries setting up a united front against imperialism In 1928, he made a speech at the 6th Congress of the Comintern on the Chinese revolution, the colonial question and the position of the Negroes in the United States

Throughout his life Katayama was an irreconcilable opponent of imperialist wars, militarism and fascism Men tion has already been made above of his vehement anti war propaganda in 1904 and 1905 and during the first imperialist war

In 1927, he was one of the founders of the International Anti Imperialist League of Struggle for National Sovereignty

and was active at the Brussels Congress of this League This Congress was unique in character and composition It was representative of nearly all the nationalities of the globe, of all walks of life and of the most varied political and religious trends

What united the delegates from the different countries was the common aim of fighting against imperialism, colonialism and war They spoke of the savage exploitation and oppression of the people of the colonies, above all the Negro population

Katayama waged a determined struggle against fascism and militarism Courageously he exposed to the world the schemes of the Japanese militarists who after occupying Manchuria pounced on other parts of China and were preparing an attack on the Soviet Union

"We must declare revolutionary war on imperialist war," he said at the International Anti War Congress held at Amsterdam in 1932, "and call on the workers and peasants to support and defend the Soviet Union in an organised way In conclusion I wish to express satisfaction at having been able to honour the solemn vow I took here at Amsterdam twenty eight years ago, when I pledged to fight for the international solidarity of the proletariat Since that day together with the Japanese Communists and revolutionary workers I have been fighting against the imperialists of Japan Today I take a new vow to fight against Japanese imperialism, in defence of the Soviet Union, the fatherland of the world proletariat From the rostrum of this Congress I urge the proletariat of the whole world to act in the same way We must organise the revolutionary proletariat of the entire globe into powerful detachments to defend the Soviet Union '

Sen Katayama's stirring address at the Anti War Congress in Amsterdam and his speeches at anti war rallies in Paris and other European cities had great effect on the progressive people of the world

In 1933 Sen Katayama appealed to Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland to launch a wide campaign in all lands against the onslaught of fascism and reaction He continued this struggle to the last breath His dying words were 'They are resorting to subtle and foul devices We must fight against fascism against renegades and traitors

Pupil and True Disciple of Lenin

His study of Lenin's works and personal meetings with the leader of the world proletariat exercised a tremendous influence on the life and work of Sen Katayama

Describing his meeting with V I Lenin early in 1922 at the 1st Congress of Communist and Revolutionary Organi sations of the Peoples of the Far East, he said Comrade Lenin talked to the delegates of each country in turn discuss ing with them the questions pertaining to their respective countries as well as the questions relating to the Far East as a whole He stressed the necessity of uniting the revolu tionary workers of the Far Eastern countries and said to me personally that he fully agreed with my article which I submitted to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern and which was later printed in the magazine *Communist International* In that article I maintained that the revolutionary workers of the Far East must form a united front against Japanese imperialism

Sen Katayama creatively applied his profound knowledge of Marxism Leninism to conditions in his own country, and helped to steer the Communist Party of Japan along the right course He waged an unrelenting struggle against sectarianism, dogmatism and the Left opportunism of Fuku moto and his followers He was firm and consistent in un masking the Right wing opportunism of Yamakawa and his followers His comprehensive work *On the Question of the Inception and Development of Marxism in Japan* is generally acknowledged to be a classic of Japanese Marxist

Leninist literature which to this day has not lost its importance To him belong more than seven hundred works dealing with various aspects of the Japanese and international working class movement

A loyal friend of the Soviet Union Sen Katayama did his utmost to promote intimate contacts and all round cooperation between the Soviet and Japanese peoples He kept the Soviet people up on the struggles of the Japanese workers against militarism and war and acquainted them with the life of his people He addressed meetings in many cities of the Soviet Union and his stirring speeches were invariably well received

In April 1930, as a Comintern delegate he attended the opening of the Turkestan Siberian Railway He visited Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara, everywhere speaking at meetings

In July of the same year he arrived at Kazan together with Comrade Musso of the Trade Union International to be present at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Tatar Republic He addressed meetings in Odessa, Baku, Vladivostok and other cities

Sen Katayama had supreme faith in the victory of communism and rejoiced with all his heart in the economic and political successes of the Soviet Union They gave him assurance of the victory of the communist cause in other lands

In 1927, after one of his trips to Siberia, he wrote "I was extremely happy to be travelling in Siberia soon after my arrival I saw vast fertile lands I thought to myself here is the destiny of the revolution, and it is a very good thing that the revolution was first won in Russia and not in some other land Soviet Russia possesses inexhaustible wealth of natural resources on its own territory and its prospects for future development are boundless World imperialism will never be able to destroy the gains of the October Revolution

Sen Katayama's personality impressed all who knew him "All who worked with him, O V Kuusinen* recalled, "were struck by his singleness of purpose and efficiency, his modesty and great consideration for others, his infinite personal charm

'Father led a rigidly regulated life, wrote Yasu Kataya ma his daughter "He rose at eight in the morning read the newspapers after breakfast, and at nine would sit down at his typewriter He left for the office at ten or eleven and if no meetings detained him, returned home at about six, resuming his work after supper Now and then in the course of the evening the sound of the typewriter would subside and he would doze off in his chair But that was for no more than ten or fifteen minutes, after which the banging of the typewriter was heard again This went on from day to day with father stubbornly following his set routine which always made even young people wonder at his energy

"Long years of hard work and persevering study strengthened the singleness and integrity of his character and his deep faith in the great cause of communism In his revolu tionary activities as well as his relations with people he was a high principled and profoundly upright person un assuming considerate and solicitous

'Father gave his workmates unsparingly of his time, helping them and sharing his knowledge and experience of life with them

* * *

Sen Katayama passed away in Moscow on November 5, 1933

The urn with his ashes was interred in the Kremlin wall, on Red Square On the day following his death *Pravda* carried many tributes to him A statement by the Presidium of the Comintern Executive said that Katayama was "a

* Eminent Soviet and Communist Party leader

steadfast fighter for the international proletarian revolution, a Bolshevik to the core a man whose long life was dedicated to determined, selfless proletarian struggle for the cause of the workers and oppressed of the whole world, for the emancipation of mankind from the bloody oppression of capitalism, for communism

When the news of Katayama's death reached Japan, the illegal *Sekki* brought out a special issue on December 5, 1933 devoted to him

Memorial meetings were clandestinely held in his honour in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe Nagoya and other cities by the Communist Party jointly with the Japanese Anti Imperialist League and the Japanese branch of the International Labour Defence At these meetings resolutions were adopted and messages of condolences sent to Katayama's relatives

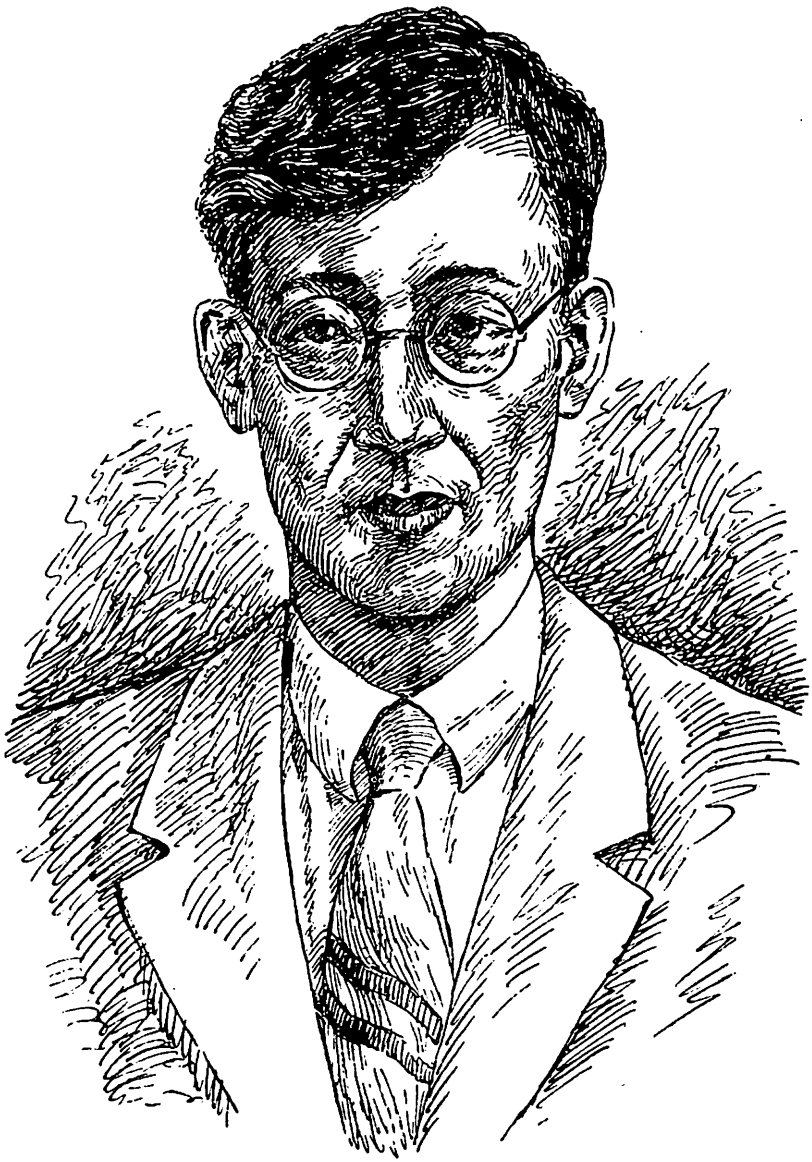
In the sombre years of reaction in 1943 Sen Katayama's friends clandestinely erected a monument at his symbolic grave, at the Aoyama Cemetery in Tokyo, where the wife and relatives of this eminent Japanese revolutionary are buried

Every year on the anniversary of Katayama's death and also on March 15 (day of the mass arrests of Japanese Com munists in 1928) fresh flowers are laid at the foot of this monument

The centenary of Sen Katayama's birth was widely mark ed on December 3, 1959 in Japan, the USSR and other countries Memorial meetings were held in Tokyo and Moscow and jubilee editions of his works printed in Japanese and Russian

Speaking of the importance of Sen Katayama's activities to the Communist Party of Japan, Yoshio Shiga, veteran of the Japanese revolutionary movement and member of the Diet, said: "Katayama was the embodiment of the ideas of proletarian internationalism His traditions are the most valuable revolutionary traditions of the Communist Party of Japan '

Together with the masses of Japan and the workers of other lands, Soviet people cherish the radiant memory of Comrade Sen Katayama, noble son of the Japanese people, and remember him as an eminent teacher and organiser of the Japanese proletariat, an unwavering internationalist and great friend of the USSR, an unbending fighter for free dom, against war and fascism



Shoichi Ichikawa

Shoichi Ichikawa

For almost a quarter of a century, from its inception in 1922 to the end of World War II, the Communist Party of Japan functioned underground in utmost secrecy And throughout these years it was the only party which consistently fought for the vital interests of the Japanese people Tens of thousands of its members were cast into prison and subjected to brutal torture Between 1928 and 1933, 34,269 persons were arrested on the mere suspicion of engaging in communist activities Many leading Communists were executed or tortured to death in police dungeons But persecution and provocation could not break the Japanese Communists and they continued their heroic struggle against fascism and war, for the bright future of their people

One of the prominent leaders of the Japanese Communist Party during this period of its history was Shoichi Ichikawa, a fighter of intrepid courage stamina, selfless devotion and a fiery speaker

Shoichi Ichikawa was born on March 20, 1892, in the village (today the city) of Ube Asa District, Yamaguchi prefecture At the age of eighteen he graduated from the Yamaguchi high school with top marks From there he

went on to study at the Hiroshima Teachers' Training College and the philology department of the Waseda University (Tokyo), known for its progressive traditions Ichikawa graduated in 1916 and became a journalist His association as a writer on social problems with the *Yomiuri*, one of the biggest newspapers of the time, gave him deeper insight into the appalling conditions in which the Japanese workers lived and the demoralisation and corruption of the ruling clique He made a thorough study of socialist literature and was drawn into the activities of the country's labour movement

The news of the Great October Socialist Revolution produced a tremendous impression in Japan The first reports of events in Russia appeared in the Japanese press as early as November 9 1917 On November 11, Japanese newspapers gave wide coverage to the historic 2nd All Russian Congress of Soviets Such momentous historic documents as the Manifesto on the transfer of power to the Soviets the Decree on Peace and the Decree on Land were conspicuously printed in full or summarised Notwithstanding the virulent tone of bourgeois press comments the people of Japan were able to learn a good deal about the Russian Revolution Under its impact in September 1918, Japan witnessed such popular action as the rice riots as well as the increasing activity of the working class movement The many socialist groups that sprang up urged the working people to come out in support of the young Soviet Republic

The Committee of Socialist Groups of Tokyo and Yokohama issued a manifesto that no doubt will go down in the history of the Japanese revolutionary movement as one of its noblest documents Reprinted in *Pravda* on September 27, 1918, this Manifesto said

'To Our Russian Comrades

'From the very outset of the Russian Revolution we have followed your fearless activity with admiration and deep sympathy That activity has exerted a tremendous influence

on the psychology of our people Today we are outraged when our government sends troops to Siberia under one pre text or another We deeply regret that we lack the forces to stave off the danger with which our imperialist govern ment threatens you We are virtually powerless to do any thing as we are being fiercely persecuted by the government But you may rest assured that the red banner of revolution will wave over all of Japan in the near future

In this situation the Japanese revolutionary minded youth reached political maturity all the more quickly By 1918, Shoichi Ichikawa was already committed to socialist ideas In December 1918, he took part in a strike of the *Yomiuri* staff against the paper's publication of militaristic articles, and was dismissed He continued writing and joined the staff of the *Kokusai Tsushin* (International Information) where his work of compiling and editing foreign news further broadened his outlook At the same time he pursued his Marxist education and translated F Engels's *The Revolu tion and Counter Revolution in Germany* into Japanese In September 1922, Ichikawa began contributing to the *Musan Kaikyu* (Proletarian Class), a magazine propagating communist ideas He also conducted propaganda among Tokyo s printers

Prominent Organiser and Theoretician

Shoichi Ichikawa joined the Communist Party of Japan in January 1923, soon after it was organised, and gave him self up wholly to Party work "My life falls into two periods before and after I joined the Communist Party of Japan he would say "My real life began after I joined the ranks of the Party

The Communist Party at once assumed leadership of the struggle waged by progressives against the armed interven tion in the Soviet Far East, the aggression in China and the preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union, and the

freedom of Korea and other colonial and dependent countries It called for "immediate withdrawal of troops from Soviet Russia, recognition of workers' and peasants' Russia and the regulation of trade relations with her It organised mass demonstrations throughout the country in support of that platform It gave its firm backing to the liberation movement of the Korean people and raised the slogan 'Japanese and Korean Workers Unite! The first big meeting under this slogan was held in the autumn of 1922 in Tokyo, and then similar meetings took place in Osaka, Kyoto and Amagasaki

Ichikawa threw himself energetically into the struggle against Japanese intervention on Soviet territory In the autumn of 1922 he made a number of speeches in defence of Soviet Russia and published an article The Rise and Position of the Far East Republic in the magazine *Musan Kaikyu* His profound and factually well substantiated analysis of the situation in the Far East showed a keen understanding of the political importance of the Far East Republic,* and enlightened the Japanese reader on the realities of that situation He demanded that Japan stop its intervention in the Soviet Far East, enter into trade and all round cooperation with Soviet Russia and recognise the Far East Republic

The Communist Party s fight against the policy of Japanese intervention had a definite effect It inspired a nationwide movement which hastened the withdrawal of Japanese troops from the Far East and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Japan

Ichikawa soon emerged as one of the leaders of the illegal Communist Party of Japan Much of his energy was devoted to strengthening the Party organisationally and establishing close ties with the masses In March 1923, he took an

* A buffer democratic republic which existed in 1920 1922 It was established on the initiative of Lenin to prevent an armed clash between Japan and Soviet Russia

active part in the work of the C P J Special Congress called to discuss the Party's new programme Ichikawa's activities were often interrupted by arrests Together with thirty other Communists he spent seven months in prison in 1923 and 1924 He bore himself courageously during the interrogation and absolutely refused to give testimony Repressions did not intimidate Ichikawa and on being released he plunged into the struggle with redoubled zeal

In May 1924, Ichikawa organised the publication of the C P J theoretical magazine *Marukushisuto shugi* (Marxism) The articles he wrote for it revealed a profound grasp of cardinal political problems and outstanding ability to correctly assess events and clearly formulate the Party line in a concrete situation They dealt with the 1924 elections to the house of representatives, the unity of the workers' and peasants parties the formation of a mass political party of the working class He was one of the most consistent fighters against the Yamakawites, Right opportunists who sought the liquidation of the Communist Party In December 1926, he was elected to the Central Committee at the 3rd Con gress of the Party and in 1926 and 1927, was the C C acting secretary

Ichikawa came out at this time against the Left opportu nism of Fukumoto and his followers, who were trying to convert the Japanese Communist Party into a narrow secta rian group, and who undermined the Party's links with the masses It was largely owing to the efforts of Sen Katayama Watanabe, Ichikawa and Tokuda that the Party was able to overcome the Left sectarian deviation, press its work among the masses, and quickly pick up strength both politically and organisationally In 1927, the membership of the Japanese Communist Party increased several-fold Nearly forty new Party units were organised at industrial plants Approxim ately ninety per cent of the Party membership were workers Party work went on as well in the rural areas

Alarmed by the growing influence of the Communist

Party, General Tanaka's reactionary government decided to give short shrift to the Japanese Communists and all their sympathisers In one day, on March 15, 1928, nearly two thou sand persons were arrested A handful of the Party's leading functionaries, Ichikawa among them, managed to elude the police and go into hiding

In the middle of 1928, the C C of the C P J delegated Ichikawa to attend the 6th Comintern Congress The journey to Moscow and back to Japan was beset with difficulties Only a man of his mettle, presence of mind and conspiratorial gifts could cope with the task At the Congress he was elected to the Committee which drafted the theses against impe rialist war

In Moscow he met Sen Katayama of whom he always spoke with the highest admiration thereafter He returned to Japan in December, bringing with him the resolutions of the 6th Congress of the Comintern which he set out to popularise among the masses

From the moment of his return to Japan until his arrest in April 1929, Ichikawa directed the activities of the Commu nist Party Thanks to his zeal and organisational gifts the Party gradually recuperated from the great losses it suffered in the 1928 arrests

Irreconcilable Foe of War and Fascism

When in 1927 1928 the Japanese military interfered in the Civil War in China by sending troops to the province of Shantung, the Communist Party's fight against Japanese militarism took on greater importance than ever It distri- buted leaflets among the soldiers of the Japanese division detailed to China, urging them to refuse to fight against China and return to their homes Among those in charge of the propaganda work in the army were Masanosuke Wata nabe, General Secretary of the C C , Shoichi Ichikawa and Yoshio Shiga

In the grim conditions of frenzied police terror, the Communist Party of Japan continued to expose the aggressive policy of the Japanese imperialists and launched a countrywide movement against intervention in China Wherever the most responsible work was to be done, Shoichi Ichikawa was there to do it

Finally, on April 16, 1929, police spies fell on his track and he was arrested With his arrest a new phase of his life began—a long and heroic struggle in prison and at the trial

Out to break this outstanding Japanese revolutionary physically and morally, his jailers put him through the third degree He was bled white beneath their unceasing blows, powerful sprays of water were jetted into his face, nails were hammered into the soles of his feet For two months the tortures went on by night and day, but the investigators could get nothing out of Ichikawa

A worker confined in the same detention jail later related how impressed the prisoners were with Shoichi Ichikawa s courage and unwavering loyalty to the communist cause "I do not know what communism means, but when a party is led by a hero like that it must be a good party, said this common worker

In July 1931, after the investigation had been dragged out for two years, the case of Shoichi Ichikawa and 270 of his comrades was brought before the court

Proletarian Revolutionary Before Bourgeois Court

The immense political importance of the trial of the Japanese Communists can hardly be grasped without some idea of the situation obtaining in Japan at the time The country was in the grip of economic crisis The ruling circles and military saw a way out of the crisis in gearing the economy to war and launching new acts of aggression against the Soviet Far East and China Preparations for the invasion

of North East China (Manchuria) had already been completed And now to give themselves a free hand, the Japanese militarists and reactionaries set out to smash the Communist Party, the vanguard of the democratic opposition to their plans Their attempts in 1928 and 1929 to suppress the revolutionary movement of the Japanese proletariat by the wholesale arrests of Communists and leaders of Left wing organisations got them nowhere, however New fighters replaced the arrested men, and anti war sentiment only became more pronounced

That is why, along with the growing terror, the Japanese reactionaries also sought to discredit the Communist Party in the eyes of the people by means of slander and provocations A frenzied anti communist crusade was launched Its instigators planned the trial of the 270 Communists as one of the high points of this crusade At this trial the prosecution hoped "to prove that the Communist Party was a "conspiratory organisation bent on "importing revolution into Japan This was calculated to justify the monstrous persecution of the revolutionary proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist Party, and ideologically pave the way for a large scale war against the USSR and China

The trial opened at the Tokyo District Court on July 21, 1931 It attracted wide public attention The court was packed and crowds thronged at the entrance, to procure an admission ticket one had to queue up in the evening and spend the rest of the night in the street waiting for one's turn Fearing disturbances, the government cordoned the square fronting the courthouse with police and troops and mounted machine guns before the building

The accused formed a committee of ten to conduct their defence The brunt of the work of this committee was handled by Shoichi Ichikawa, Kyuichi Tokuda and Yoshio Shiga The committee appointed Ichikawa to speak in the name of all the defendants Converting the prisoners' dock into a public platform, Ichikawa spoke in the course of five days,

rebuffing the incessant attacks of the judges and defending the honour of the Party He spoke of the heroic road traversed by the Party since its inception flayed the reaction and militarism and championed proletarian internationa lism

"This trial itself is in effect an episode of the class strugg le Ichikawa declared "Look is not this courtroom full of policemen, gendarmes and jailers? Here in this class court and in the last moments before we go to the scaffold, we Communists will not give up the struggle and will always lead it

"We do not intend to toe the line and utter only such trite phrases as are considered permissible We do not intend to hide the truth about the Communist Party of Japan The proletariat are not afraid of the truth The bourgeoisie who live by oppressing exploiting and enslaving the masses are the ones who must dread, avoid and distort the truth The Japan Communist Party did not come into being fortui tously Such a party cannot be founded or liquidated at anybody's whim The existence and development of the Communist Party of Japan rest objectively on definite condi tions

"In collaboration with the bourgeoisie of the whole world, the Japanese bourgeoisie took a hand in the counter revolu tionary intervention against Soviet Russia Their class instinct told the Japanese workers that the victorious pro letariat of Russia were brothers of the Japanese proletariat from whom they should learn and draw inspiration The Japanese workers did more than sympathise with the Russian revolution and greet it from over the sea The foremost class conscious workers and prominent revolutionaries crossed the sea to Siberia in order to take part personally in the Russian revolution Scorning danger, they carried on pro paganda in the aggressive army of the Japanese bourgeoisie They explained to the soldiers that they must not strangle the Russian revolution, must not shoot at the workers and

peasants of Soviet Russia, land of our brothers, our fellow workers

"The Japanese proletariat have proved by all their activities that in the battle hardened Bolshevik Party guided by Lenin, the world's greatest leader, they see the true vanguard of the working class, the most trustworthy friend of the toiling masses

"While agitating for defence of the USSR, the only proletarian state in the world, for support of the Chinese revolution and the liberation and independence movement in the colonies, our Party has at the same time upheld the unity of the international labour movement It has rallied the people against the threat of imperialist war and opposed the dispatch of Japanese troops abroad as well as other manifestations of chauvinism and militarism

Shoichi Ichikawa ended his speech with the words

"The danger hangs over us of daily reprisals against the workers and peasants, the savage extermination of the Japanese and Chinese people as a result of the aggressive war in Manchuria, of an aggressive war against the Soviet Union

"Down with imperialist war! Down with the monarchy! The people are rising to fight for freedom and land The people's revolution is inevitable!

"Long live the Communist Party of Japan!

"Long live the Communist International!

One can readily imagine what an impression this speech made, how it raised the prestige of the Japanese Communist Party among the workers, how popular Shoichi Ichikawa's name became with ordinary people and how hateful to the reactionaries and militarists! This trial of the Communist Party leaders boomeranged against the military clique who had inspired it, it assumed the dimensions of an anti-war manifestation, it popularised the Party's struggle for the interests of the working people, for peace

Ichikawa's speech at the trial remains one of the historic

documents of the Japanese communist and working class movement It was published in the special issue of the magazine *Puroretaria Kagaku* (Proletarian Science) on October 29, 1931, dedicated to the fourteenth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution The magazine stressed the importance of this speech in exposing the nature of the war waged by the Japanese imperialists against China and the danger of an attack on the USSR Later, in prison, Ichikawa edited and supplemented the text of his speech, and the propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party published it illegally under the title of "A Brief History of the Struggle of the Japan Communist Party

On July 5, 1932, the court heard the Prosecutor Hirata enumerate Ichikawa's "crimes and demand a sentence of life imprisonment More than a thousand workers demonstrated in Tokyo against the prosecutor's speech A campaign for the release of the arrested Communists swept the country The truth about the trial found its way into the world press

On October 29, 1932, the verdict was pronounced Ichikawa received a life sentence The lawyer for the defence appealed the case

The trial was reopened at the Tokyo Court of Appeals only in 1934 This time the defendants were divided into two groups, which made it easier for the judges to carry out their foul schemes The sentences passed in October 1934 included life imprisonment for Shoichi Ichikawa Together with G Kokuryo and K Tokuda he was packed off to Abashiri

This prison stood in the mountainous north of Hokkaido Island, where the winter frosts often ran to thirty degrees below zero C and the temperature in the cells dropped to eight or even ten degrees below freezing so that the prisoners' breath turned to ice on their blankets Even the summer brought no relief from the cold because of the chilly fogs against which even warm garments were no protection

To be sent to Abashiri was to be sentenced to death—only a slower and more agonising death

Ichikawa's health was already undermined by the brutal tortures he had endured during interrogation His jailers at Abashiri refused to allow him extra clothing in winter The sharp change in temperature completely shattered his health He was so run down that he could hardly move His revolution ary spirit, however, was not broken and his resistance continued In the medieval dungeon to which he was confined, he displayed the same stout courage as in the face of torture and in the courtroom Fighting off disease, he took his daily walk even in the bitterest frost, enduring excruciating pain holding on to the wall for support and leaning on his stick

Kyuichi Tokuda, who was one of his prison mates, wrote afterwards "At Abashiri Ichikawa contracted a disease of the nervous system and stomach He lost so much weight that he was only a shadow of himself—and yet he never complained With sunken burning eyes he often spoke for the other prisoners and always took their side against the prison authorities

After the war Ichikawa s letters to his relatives were published They are striking proofs of his great stamina On March 17, 1935, for example he wrote to his mother "I am as firm as ever, not out of pride or glory, not for the sake of perpetuating my name I am merely acting as any one in my place would act All who knew Ichikawa attest to the nobility, refinement and modesty of his character

Ichikawa's courageous conduct at the trial came to the knowledge of the whole world At the 7th Congress of the Communist International he was elected to the Comintern Executive by proxy, along with Ernst Thaelmann

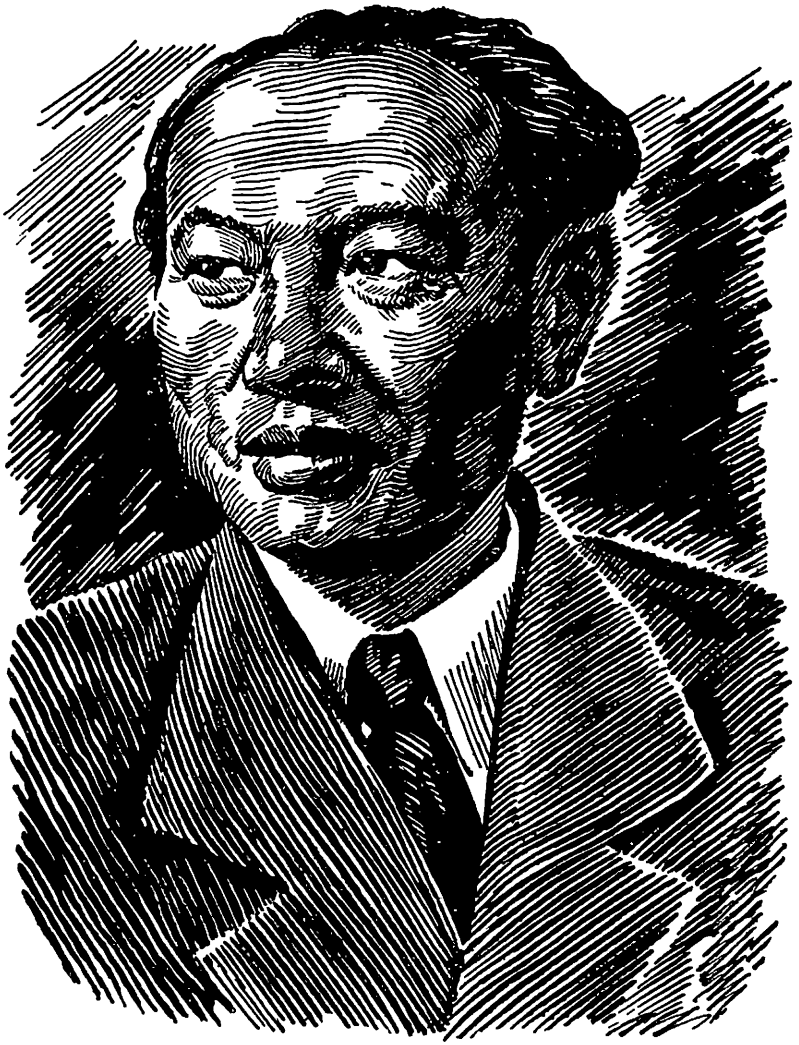
In April 1940, Shoichi Ichikawa was transferred to the Chiba prison near Tokyo and from there, in June 1944, to the Miyagi prison at Sendai Here the inmates subsisted on a hash of barley, soya beans and maize Ichikawa by this time had lost all his teeth as a result of pyorrhea and could

eat only soft food He was terribly weak, to keep from starving completely he would separate the maize and soya beans with the help of a little stick from the coarse barley, then grind the barley, mix it with the rest of the ration, and roll it all into patties In the course of the day he consumed three such patties, each no bigger than the hollow of the hand He looked like a walking skeleton Though a tall man, he weighed only 38 kilograms before his death And yet the spirit of struggle and faith in victory did not desert him

"We've got to keep alive, he would say to his comrades "Japan will soon be defeated We must come out of jail and get back to work

Shoichi Ichikawa died in the prison hospital on March 15, 1945, just six months before the capitulation of Japan Even after the death of this ardent soldier of the revolution, his enemies continued to dread him No notices of his death were printed in the newspapers It was not made public until after the defeat of Japanese imperialism On March 18, 1948, his remains were buried at the Yoshiyama cemetery in Tokyo alongside the graves of other martyrs of Japanese freedom movement

Ichikawa's life, which he gave unstintingly to the cause of emancipating the Japanese working people, his boundless love for his people and his staunch proletarian internatio nalism continue to exert a tremendous educational influence on the Communists of his land His *Brief History of the Struggle of the Japan Communist Party* has had several reprints



Kyuichi Tokuda

Kyuichi Tokuda

'We make sacrifices expecting no rewards, and nothing can stop us from fighting to better the life of our people

K Tokuda

On July 19, 1948, the little mining town of Saga, in Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese islands, was the scene of unusual animation That morning notices had been posted in the streets of a meeting in the town hall called by the Communist Party of Japan, which had just come out into the open By 6 p m three thousand townspeople filled the hall They came to hear Kyuichi Tokuda, General Secretary of the Communist Party and member of Parliament, give a talk on the "Communist Party of Japan and the Present Situation ' The miners warmly greeted the speaker, whose name was well known to them They knew that this valiant champion of the people's interests, opponent of militarism and advocate of peace, had spent eighteen years in Japan's most ghastly dungeons and that no tortures or ordeals could make him renounce the ideas of Marxism-Leninism

In his talk Tokuda explained the reasons for the disastrous state of the Japanese economy and the deplorable plight of

its working people, who now had to shoulder the bill for the wars unleashed by the Japanese generals He spoke of the aggressive schemes of the Japanese reactionaries and the Communist Party's struggle to unite the democratic forces of the land

"Japan is on the verge of collapse Unless we do something about it, she is bound to become a dependent country,' Tokuda said

Just then a bottle containing dynamite with detonation caps attached to it was hurled at the speaker from a top balcony The man who threw it was recognised as Koga, ringleader of the local anti communist organisation Fortunately this improvised grenade, which fell about two metres from the spot where Tokuda stood, was so crudely made that the caps came off when the bottle hit the floor and so they failed to ignite the dynamite All the same two of them exploded at Tokuda's feet and he was wounded in the neck, left arm and shoulder (thirty eight splinters were later extracted from his wounds) The commotion in the hall enabled the culprit to escape

Tokuda was determined to have the meeting go on Returning to the platform he motioned to the audience to be calm "No such attempts on my life can scare me, he said Although he was bleeding profusely he spoke for another half hour To avoid further incidents dozens of Communists formed a cordon around him The meeting ended on a note of great enthusiasm Only when he finished speaking did Tokuda agree to be taken to the local hospital to have his wounds dressed A few days later, with the wounds still unhealed, he continued his very successful tour of Kyushu Island

The attempt on Kyuichi Tokuda's life aroused bitter resentment The trade unions called a one hour general strike in protest against the government policies which fostered an atmosphere of communist baiting and encouraged brazen acts by fascist elements Protest meetings were held

in Tokyo, Osaka and other big cities Statements bristling with indignation were published in the press by many workers' and peasants' organisations among them the Congress of Industrial Unions of Japan, the State Railwaymen's Union and the Japanese Peasants' Union Both the press and radio paid tribute to Tokuda's exceptional courage and his unwavering faith in Communist ideals

"Our Tokyu is with us, leading the struggle for the interests of the toilers, for our righteous cause, the workers said with pride

Nor was the terrorist act on Kyushu Island an isolated instance A few days previously, on July 14, 1948, imperialist agents tried to murder Palmiro Togliatti Attempts, too, were made on the life of Jacques Duclos and Communist Party leaders in other lands The international reaction launched an offensive against the working class and all the toilers, it was out to physically annihilate the most prominent leaders of the communist and working class movement Under the circumstances it was more important than ever to strengthen proletarian solidarity

The day following the attempt on Tokuda's life, late in the evening of July 20th, the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party received a telegram from Moscow stating that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had learned with indignation of the treacherous attempt by a despicable underling of the enemies of the Japanese people on the life of our Comrade Tokuda, eminent leader of the working class in Japan, and that it hoped Comrade Tokuda would soon recover and resume his fruitful activities

There was an immediate reaction too, on the part of Communist Parties in other lands *Unita* leading organ of the Italian Communist Party, wrote on July 20 "This new crime against one of the leaders of the working class shows up the true face of the instigators of these crimes In Japan, as in Italy and France, the warmongers are out

to strangle the forces of democracy, the more easily to involve these lands in war The rebuff they have received in Italy and will receive in Japan should be a grave warning to them

A stirring poem called "No! was dedicated to Kyuichi Tokuda by Konstantin Simonov the well known Soviet poet

I saw Comrade Tokuda
At a workers meeting in Tokyo
Five minutes from the prison
Where he left a slice of his life—
Fifteen years!
He was calm but sparing of speech
His face tired mouth set wearing
The same jacket that covered his back
When he turned it on the convoys
At the prison gates
He wore the same jacket no doubt
The day they tried to kill him
As he hurled the same word again
Into the teeth of his foes
No! No! No!
Many were the times they had heard
That word defiantly flung at them
All those fifteen years in jail
From his arrest to his release
'No! and again 'No!
Not the crazy whim of a fiend
Raised the assassin s hand
By killing him to still the word
Was the cold intent of the crime
As if communism can be killed!
No!

* * *

Kyuichi Tokuda was born on September 12, 1894, in the village of Naho, Kunchyan District, Okinawa His father was a printer who died when the boy was only eleven Kyuichi grew up in an old shanty and the family was too poor to send him to school To give him an education, the help of his rich maternal grandmother, a tradeswoman and money lender had to be enlisted This help was far from disinterested, for all the while he attended secondary school Kyuichi did the bookkeeping for his grandmother, collected

money from her debtors and performed many other chores 'I entered secondary school at the age of thirteen Tokuda wrote in his reminiscences published in Japan "and even at that age knew how the workers, peasants and other people were cheated by the money lenders Fierce hatred for all forms of injustice filled his being

The first important book which fell into Kyuichi's hands at secondary school was *Ichinenyuchan* (A Year and a Half) by Chomin Nakae* It described the tyranny of the Meiji rule and exposed the corruption of the military and the bureaucrats Later at the age of seventeen he read *The Essence of Socialism* by Shusui Kotoku These books helped to shape his world outlook

After secondary school and a year of preparatory studies, Tokuda enrolled at the Seventh Tokyo College in 1912, quitting it shortly afterwards Since nothing but foreign languages were taught there I decided it was a waste of time, dropped attendance and turned to my favourite occupation—mainly the reading of books on socialism, wrote Tokuda

Tokuda returned to Okinawa in 1913, at the age of nineteen and took a position as a primary school teacher The textbooks of the period being impossibly chauvinistic and monarchistic the young teacher put them aside and taught the children from progressive contemporary literature "What I particularly enjoyed was retelling the contents of books by Russian authors, he recalled

At one time Tokuda worked as a clerk in the prefecture, learning yet more about the injustices the Japanese peasants had to endure His heart was wholly on the side of the oppressed and in every way he could he opposed injustice and exploitation

The longing to continue his education and fit himself

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* Nakae Chomin (1845 1901)—well known Japanese philosopher and writer who was greatly influenced by the 18th century French Enlighteners

better for the struggles ahead made young Tokuda abandon his native parts once again He was back in Tokyo in February 1917, working as a bank clerk and studying evenings at the law faculty of the Nippon University from which he graduated with honours in 1920

The October Revolution had a tremendous effect on the development of the revolutionary movement in Japan And young Tokuda identified himself with that movement In Tokyo he joined some socialist study groups, going more deeply into the theory of scientific socialism and propagating it among the workers Here, too, he first became active in the people's movement

First Baptism of Fire

An article appeared in the *Tokyo nichinichi* on August 5, 1918, with the sensational headline—"Fishermen's Wives Demand Cheaper Rice Several Wounded in Clashes with Police " The reference was to the serious disturbances which took place on the evening of August 3, 1918, at Nishimitsubashi, a fishing village in the north of Toyama prefecture, Honshu So began the rice riots which shook Japan for over a month

This massive action on the part of the Japanese working people was induced by the steep rise in the price of their staple food—rice During the First World War the plight of the Japanese working people, bad enough before, grew considerably worse The termination of the war did not bring the long awaited peace or improvement in their lot And when the Japanese rulers decided to start the invasion of the Soviet Far East and the rumour got out that troops were on their way there, the price of rice bounded precipitously From twelve sen* in 1917, the price of one sho of

* One sho (Japanese measure)=1 8 litres, one sen=0 01 yen

rice jumped on August 3, 1918, to thirty eight and on August 9 to fifty three sen

From Toyama the disturbances spread to other prefectures and big cities The outraged people stormed rice shops and warehouses and distributed rice among the needy They set fire to the houses of rice profiteers and attacked police stations The unrest reached Tokyo and its environs on August 12 Later in August the rice riots received support from striking miners, textile and other workers Nearly ten million persons took part in these mass actions The rice riots were clearly political in character and reflected the influence of the Russian revolution They were cruelly sup pressed by the Terauchi government Many of the participants were killed or injured Nearly eight thousand persons were taken into custody, the majority being tried and given harsh penalties

Kyuichi Tokuda was active among the rioters in Tokyo "The riots in Tokyo, he recalled, "began in the Funagawa neighbourhood, the people afterwards attacking the rice warehouses at Kanda and Ryogoku and moving on towards Bansei bashi Street The police arrived on the scene in a van, from which they lashed out at the crowd with long clubs The crowd scattered On reaching the Bansei bashi Bridge, the people found the way blocked by troops The officer in command unsheathed his sword and ordered the soldiers to open fire, but they refused With difficulty I found my way back to the hostel in Kanda Street, and thus avoided arrest This rice riot was my first experience of participa tion in a big mass movement

After graduating from the university, Tokuda began to practise law To him this was but another way of being use ful to the socialist movement He pleaded the cases of arrested strikers, political demonstrators and the landless peasants who were uniting to form the Tenants League

An Organiser and Leader of the Illegal Communist Party of Japan

The rice riots, occurring spontaneously and without any organised leadership nevertheless played an important role in advancing the working class and peasant movement Summing up the results of this first mass rising of the Japanese proletariat, Sen Katayama wrote "The experience of the rice riots and the tremendous wave of strikes showed that spontaneous mass action by the proletariat cannot end in victory The key to revolutionary victory is in organisation That is the lesson the Japanese proletariat have learned from this struggle

A period during which preparations were made to found the Communist Party of Japan followed the rice riots Kyuichi Tokuda was extremely active in these preparations

He was among the founders of the Nippon Shakaishugi Domei (Socialist League), one of the first Japanese communist organisations set up in 1920 by representatives of the working class and progressive intelligentsia When the League split over differences between the genuine Marxists and the anarcho syndicalist elements, Tokuda headed the socialist Suiyokai or Wednesday Society and represented it at the 1st Congress of Communist and Revolutionary Organisations of the Peoples of the Far East which met in Moscow in January and February of 1922 In its resolutions the Congress stressed the error and harm of sporadic action and the expediency of uniting the various communist groups in Japan to form a Communist Party

On returning to his native land Tokuda helped organise the Inaugural Congress, held illegally in Tokyo, in July 1922, at which the Communist Party of Japan was formed He was elected to its Central Committee

Founded during the upswing of the struggle of the workers of the whole world for emancipation and inspired by the Russian revolution, the Communist Party of Japan emerged as

the true exponent of the revolutionary traditions of the Japanese toilers Under arduous conditions of illegality it fought resolutely for the overthrow of the monarchy for elementary democratic freedoms, for the eradication of the semi-feudal landowning system and the transfer of the land to the peasants It exposed the aggressive designs of the Japanese militarists who were preparing to attack the Soviet Union and China, and advocated complete independence for the colonial and semi colonial peoples of Asia

The Right wing opportunist liquidationist deviation (Yamakawa and others) and the Left wing sectarian elements headed by Fukumoto presented a major threat to the communist movement in Japan between 1923 and 1927 Like Sen Katayama, Masanosuke Watanabe Shoichi Ichikawa, Kenzo Yamamoto and others Kyuichi Tokuda did his utmost to combat this danger He served two prison terms, in 1923 and 1926 His diversified, teeming activity won the Party s acknowledgement and in 1924 he acted as the Central Committee Secretary Putting great trust in him, the Party sent him to Moscow in 1926 and then in 1927 to attend the plenary meetings of the Comintern Executive Tokuda had a big hand in drafting the 1927 Comintern theses of Japan These theses helped the Communist Party of Japan to overcome the Fukumoto Left sectarian deviation and defeat its supporters

On returning to Japan in the autumn of 1927, Tokuda joined S Ichikawa M Watanabe, G Kokuryo and others in a vigorous effort to activate the Party s work among the masses and solidify its ranks Their work brought immediate results and the Party rapidly regained its strength The increasing number of strikes and strikers attested to the awakening revolutionary consciousness of the masses In February 1928 the Communist Party of Japan began the publication of the *Sekki*, its leading newspaper Kyuichi Tokuda ran for Parliament in February 1928 from the third precinct of the Fukuoka prefecture (Kyushu Island) on the ticket of

the communist-aligned legal Workers' and Peasants' Party (Rono), but failed to gain a majority The authorities hastened to lay hands on him, and he was apprehended on February 26, while on his way from Fukuoka to Tokyo Shortly afterwards, on March 15 1928, wholesale arrests of Communists and their sympathisers followed

There was another wave of arrests on April 16, 1929 Practically all Left organisations were banned in 1928 and 1929, revolutionary activities were proscribed under penalty of death

General Tanaka's frankly pro imperialist government resorted to terror and reprisals against democratic organisations, primarily the Communist Party of Japan, in order to crush any resistance to the aggressive designs of the militarists

On October 6, 1928, M Watanabe, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Japan, was brutally assassinated on the island of Taiwan S Yamamoto, a member of Parliament from the Workers' and Peasants' Party, was killed on March 5, 1929 T Kobayashi, a talented proletarian writer, was tortured to death at a police station on February 20, 1933 The eminent Communist Party members Ueda, Noro and Iwata met with violent deaths in 1934 and 1935

Sixty thousand persons were arrested in Japan between 1929 and 1939 on charges of "communist activities Owing to these arrests the membership of the Party Central Committee changed four times

Undeterred, the Communist Party of Japan continued its struggle and work among the masses Japanese Communists fought not only out of jail but in the courtroom and in the prison cells as well They made effective use of the trial of 1931 1933 to propagate communist ideas and give publicity to the activities of their Party Sentence was not passed on the defendants at this trial until October 1935, after they had been in jail for more than seven years pending the "investigation of the case Tokuda received a sentence of ten

years, but was not released when his term expired He came out on October 10, 1945, after having spent nearly eighteen years behind bars

In Ice-Cold Abashiri

Kyuichi Tokuda was incarcerated in Abashiri, one of Japan's most dreaded prisons in northern Hokkaido He was brought there on December 27, 1935, when the island was heavily blanketed in snow Somewhat earlier Shoichi Ichikawa and Goitiro Kokuryo were delivered to the same prison

It was bitingly cold in the gloomy dank prison cells with the temperature in winter often dropping to eight and nine degrees below zero C and a coat of hoarfrost settling thick on the walls Before turning in for the night the prisoners cracked the ice in their tub and rubbed themselves down with the cold water Those who shunned this spartan treatment soon caught cold and perished The prisoners slept with their heads under the blanket to keep their faces from getting frost bitten

Tokuda, who had grown up in the south of Japan where frosts and snow were practically unknown, took very sick not long after arriving at Abashiri In his reminiscences he wrote "After I had been at Abashiri for a little over a year (I remember the date very well, it was February 11, 1937, the anniversary of the ascension of the first Japanese Emperor to the throne) I found I couldn't get up one morning My whole body was racked with pain, especially my head, legs and back I had to be carried to the hospital and given injections in the back, legs and arms For a week I was unable to move The neuralgic pains became chronic For eighteen months I could not move my right arm which was completely paralysed The pain in Tokuda's arm persisted to the end of his life, a continual reminder of the years at Abashiri

But Tokuda and his comrades did not lose heart They studied, they resisted the prison authorities, demanding also their rights and better conditions for their fellow prisoners protesting against the sweat labour required of the latter and carrying on propaganda among them When the Japanese imperialists made war on China they explained to the pri soners the causes of aggressive wars and pointed out that the defeat of Japanese imperialism was inevitable

'Thinking in prison of the future of my country and people Tokuda wrote, "I could not help feeling sad After Manchuria came China The struggle against the imperialists was never out of our minds I bit my lips at the thought that Japan was drawing closer every year to her end We Com munists had consistently opposed imperialist war—before our arrest, during our trial even in prison At first the other prisoners argued hotly with us but gradually as the situation proved the truth of our predictions our words struck home

Kyuichi Tokuda remained at the Abashiri prison for more than four years from late in 1935 until April 1940 when he was transferred to the Chiba prison in Honshu where con ditions were just as bad The prisoners were fed with skilly and a few vegetables Their sole joy was the coming of the warm spring winds In subsequent years Tokuda was trans ferred from one prison to another and the end of the war found him in the Toyotami prison at Tokyo The character given him by the prison authorities read "Prisoner utterly unpe nitent He was still in Tokyo when the order for his release arrived

At the Head of the Communist Party of Japan

The unconditional capitulation of the Japanese general staff, all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under Japanese control, no matter where they were stationed, was signed aboard the American man of war *Missouri*, anchored in the Bay of Tokyo, on September 2, 1945, at 9 04 a m Simulta

neously the Japanese government officially accepted the Potsdam Declaration signed on July 26, 1945 One of the major terms of the Declaration was stated in Clause 10 It said that the Japanese government was to remove all ob stacles in the way of the revival and strengthening of democra tic tendencies among the Japanese people grant them freedom of speech and worship, and respect their basic human rights

A shattering blow was dealt to the monarchic fascist regime by the defeat of Japanese imperialism in the Second World War The forces of Japanese reaction were severely undermined and favourable conditions created for the growth of the democratic movement

After Japan's surrender political prisoners were allowed to read newspapers and listen to the radio But there was no hint of their release Yoshio Shiga sent a letter to American Occupation Army Headquarters pointing out that the release of the Communists prisoners was being illegally held up He received no answer Not until the beginning of October a month after the termination of the war did the Ministry of Justice defer to world democratic pressure and the protests in Japan itself and begin to let the political prisoners out

At long last on October 10, 1945, the heavy prison gates opened before Kyuichi Tokuda and his comrades The work- ing people of the Japanese capital came out with red banners to welcome the released Communists Professor Hajime Ka- wakami, an eminent Japanese scientist, although gravely ill and bed ridden, gave utterance in verse to the feelings he experienced on learning of the release of Kyuichi Tokuda and Yoshio Shiga He wrote

Eighteen years—they must have been Hell
Six thousand days alone in your cell!
The battle s won and stronger for the fight
You stand once more in the sunlight
Comrade Tokuda! And Shiga your friend!
In ages past and years without end
Our land has known no better men
Or happier moments than this when
We clasp your hands in ours again

Soon after this first group of Japanese Communists, others were set free The leaders of the Japanese Communist Party joined the militant ranks of the proletariat to fight for the happy future of their people On their release from prison they distributed an "Appeal of the Communists of Japan and began with the greatest zeal to restore the Commu nist Party which had suffered grave losses during the period of its illegal existence Kyuichi Tokuda was elected to the Political Bureau and became General Secretary of the Party Central Committee at the 4th Congress of the C P J in De cember 1945, retaining that post to the end of his life

The Communist Party revived its activities in a complicated international situation and no less complicated do mestic set up As a result of international democratic pressure and the struggle of the Japanese working people a number of democratic reforms were introduced in Japan between 1945 and 1948 Under the new Constitution of 1947 the Emperor's power was restricted and wider rights were vested in par liament War as a means of settling international disputes was outlawed The implementation of the land reform pro gramme resulted in the poor peasants gaining small holdings and the system of large holdings being considerably curtailed Labour legislation was introduced Other reforms, too, were carried out However, the American Occupation Authorities flagrantly violated the Potsdam Declaration and their pledge to help democratise the land, giving every support to the Japanese reactionaries Consequently the country's demo cratisation was half hearted from the outset and often, in fact, fictitious

The Central Committee of the Communist Party headed by Kyuichi Tokuda drafted a programme of action aimed at setting up a wide popular front to direct the struggle of the working class and all democratic forces Its planks called for full implementation of the Potsdam Declaration, the ousting and punishing of war criminals, overthrow of the monarchy, consistent reorganisation of the state apparatus

on a democratic basis, liquidation of feudalist landownership, dissolution of the *zaibatsu* financial clique, speedy rehabilitation of the nation's economy and the raising of the work ers' living standards

In the organisational sphere the Central Committee gave most of its attention to restoring the central and local Party organisations which had been hard hit by the recent mass reprisals The influence of the Party now spread rapidly among the masses Millions of people were ready to fight for their vital interests Kyuichi Tokuda was the moving spirit and organiser of all the Party's practical activities His popularity soared, between 1945 and 1949, he strikingly demonstrated his gifts as an orator and strong, dynamic leader

It was not long before the Communist Party was able to point to considerable headway in re establishing the trade unions and peasant organisations and uniting the intellec tuals Many trade unions came under the influence of the Communist Party, including the large All Japan Congress of Industrial Trade Unions The prestige of the Communist Party rose among intellectuals, writers, teachers, etc It sponsored major political demonstrations, like the May Day demonstration of 1946, which drew a record crowd of 500,000

Not only the increase in its membership but the number of votes polled by Communists running for parliament were signs of the Party's growing influence When the Commu nist Party of Japan regained its legal status it had no more than 300 members By the end of 1945, their number reached 1,200, in 1946, it soared to 25,000 and in the middle of 1949, to nearly 200,000 Nearly three million votes (9 8 per cent of the total number) were cast for the Communist Party candidates in the election of January 23, 1949, when the Party gained thirty five seats in the Diet

Kyuichi Tokuda was among the candidates to win the largest number of votes As a member of Parliament he fearlessly exposed the policy of the Shidehara and the Yoshi

da reactionary governments He laid the blame for the war at the door of the military clique, the monopolies closely linked with it and the big landholders with the emperor at their head He battled for better conditions for the workers and for a peaceful and independent course of the nation s development

Kyuichi Tokuda was the first Communist to speak in the Japanese Diet The address he made at the opening of the 90th session on June 24 1946 created quite a stir He spoke with such eloquence and conviction that even members of the Liberal Party then in office, were impressed The Liberal Ichiro Hoshida said "I agree with Tokuda when he claims that the military, the big bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats started the war I disagree with him that responsibility for the war must also be laid at the Emperor s door Be that as it may I have the highest respect for Tokuda s intentions of elucidating the policy of the Communist Party by parlia mentary activity

Outside Parliament, too, the Communist Party engaged in political work on a broad scale The 6th Party Congress in December 1947 pointed up the danger of the continued American imperialist occupation and conversion of Japan into a U S war base It raised the slogan of struggle for the strict observance of the Potsdam Declaration and for national sovereignty In March 1946 the Communist Party issued its call for a National Democratic Front, and in August of the same year it was joined by the Workers and Peasants' Party, the trade unions and other democratic organisations in found ing the Union in Defence of Democracy (Minshushugi yogo domei) with several million members The Communist Party rallied the masses to the fight against the resurgence of mili tarism for the independence of their country, the norma lisation of diplomatic relations with the USSR and China, and wider contacts with all the socialist and peace loving countries

Throughout the period of preparation for aggression

Kyuichi Tokuda among children

against Korea, as during that war, the American Occupation Authorities and Japanese reactionaries made it perfectly clear that they meant to suppress the communist and working-class movement in Japan at any price They instigated a number of provocatory acts including the derailing of a passenger train not far from the Matsukawa Station A wave of brutal repressions followed In June 1950, the American authorities outlawed the political activities of all members of the Communist Party's Central Committee and the editorial board of the *Akahata* and then they closed that newspaper, which did not come out again for two years A warrant for the arrest of eight members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, including Kyuichi Tokuda was signed at the Tokyo Attorney General s office on July 15, 1950 Warned of his impending arrest by friends Tokuda went underground, but continued to guide the Party's activities In the autumn of 1950, practically all Party organisations had to go over to a semi legal footing All Party newspapers and periodicals were banned The Japan Council of Trade Union Relations (Zenroren) was dissolved Meetings and demonstrations were prohibited

At the same time, on instructions from the American Occupation Authorities, the persecution of Japanese reac tionary politicians, generals and former secret police offi cials was discontinued In defiance of the new Constitution, a "police reserve corps and "naval security corps were set up, forming the embryo of the new army and fleet which re ceived the blessings of the United States Ignoring the Pots dam Declaration, the American and Japanese ruling circles drew up the San Francisco Peace Treaty signed in 1951 over the heads of the Soviet Union, China, India and other countries

Undaunted by reprisals the Japanese Communists fearlessly opposed the war against Korea and warned against the utilisation of Japan as a military base for that war With intrepid courage they headed their people's fight for peace,

for sovereignty, democracy and higher living standards The appeal for an all round peace settlement was signed by 4,800 000 persons, the Stockholm appeal for an atomic weapon ban by 6,400,000 and the Berlin appeal for a five power peace pact by 5 700,000 The movement to prohibit atomic and hydrogen weapons and their testing gained tremendous momentum

With the situation growing increasingly complicated, differences arose within the ranks of the Communist Party They concerned questions of the Party's platform and tactics under conditions of American occupation Actually there was a split in the Party The new Programme of the Communist Party of Japan—"Immediate Demands of the Communist Party of Japan —drawn up in 1951 with Tokuda's active participation helped at this particular stage to unite the Party organisationally and ideologically and to rally the masses around it

The long years in prison and strenuous struggle in which he engaged in the post war years told on Kyuichi Tokuda's health He fell gravely ill and went abroad for a cure In 1953, he suffered a brain haemorrhage paralysing his speech and movements On October 14, 1953, Kyuichi Tokuda breathed his last in Peking

The official announcement of the death of Kyuichi Tokuda, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Japan, read out on July 29, 1955, at the 6th National Party Con vention, was received with deep sorrow in Japan and other countries The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union sent a message of condolences to the Com munists of Japan on the death of Kyuichi Tokuda "who dedicated his entire life to the cause of the working class, the freedom and national independence of the Japanese peo ple'

Yoshio Shiga, member of the Presidium of the C C , C P J , an old friend who had gone through prison with Tokuda and worked at his side after the war, went to China in August

1955 to bring the urn with his ashes back to Japan Shiga was accompanied by Tatsu, Tokuda's widow At a memorial meeting held on September 13, 1955, Shiga said "Comrade Tokuda inherited the glorious traditions of the Japanese revolutionary movement whose father was Sen Katayama Together with Katayama he was one of the founders of the Japanese Communist Party

The 7th Congress of the Communist Party of Japan, convoked in July and August of 1958, summed up the Party's activities of the eleven years following the 6th Congress, it paid special tribute to the personal merits of Kyuichi Tokuda who from the very birth of the Party had 'invariably held high its banner and in the post war period led the Party and actively helped to re establish it Some of the drawbacks in the Party's work and errors committed by its leadership in the past also figured in the resolutions of this Congress

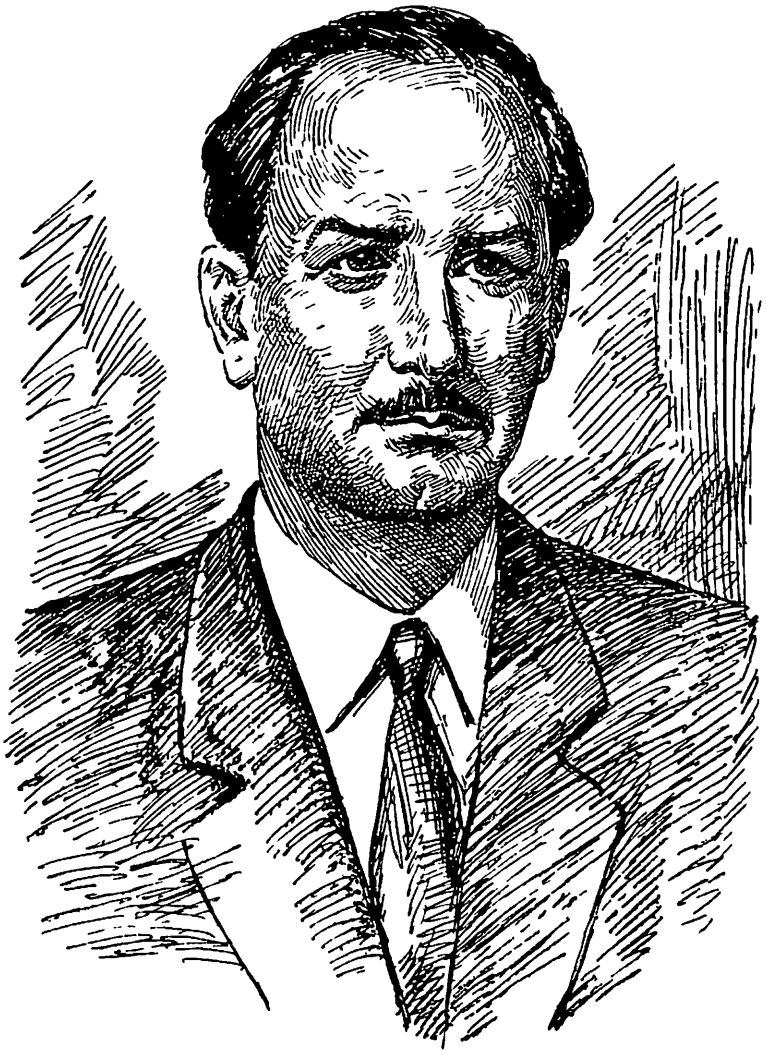
A picture of Kyuichi Tokuda was hung beside the portraits of Marx, Lenin and Sen Katayama in the hall where the 7th Congress of the Japanese Communist Party was held

Kyuichi Tokuda's noble record is known to people in many countries of the world He will long be remembered as an ardent champion of the solidarity and wide cooperation of the working people and fraternal Communist and Workers' Parties in their fight against the common foe "Comrade Tokuda s whole life and work wrote the newspaper *For Lasting Peace, For People's Democracy*, "are a striking example of the courage and fearlessness of the proletarian revolutionary, of selfless dedication to the cause of working class emancipation and the great ideas of communism

Kyuichi Tokuda was ever a true friend of the Soviet Union During the Civil War period he fought against foreign military intervention in Soviet Russia, for the resumption of diplomatic relations with Russia and then against the preparations for an attack on the USSR, after the war he advocated the speedy conclusion of a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, extensive economic and cultural contacts be-

tween the USSR and Japan, friendship between our peoples and our Parties In October 1952, working deep underground, Kyuichi Tokuda sent a message on behalf of the Japanese Communist Party to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in which he said "Our Party and working class see in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a true friend and teacher '

Soviet people will always remember this indomitable fighter for the interests of the Japanese people and honour his memory



Farajallah Helu

Farajallah Helu

The town of Jubeil (ancient Byblos, once famed for its seafarers and shipbuilders) lies midway between Beirut and Tarablys (Tripoli) To this day it attracts many students of Phoenician culture During its history of four thousand odd years the old walls of this town have seen much But even they seldom saw such throngs pass by as on the Sunday of June 4 1961 Since early morning these thousands had been pouring, by foot, motor car or bicycle down the winding road to Hasrayel, a village in the foothills of Jabel Lyubnana where a memorial meeting was being held for Farajallah Helu Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lebanese Communist Party, himself a native of these parts

It was an endless stream of people—workers and peasants, writers and journalists, teachers and students, Muslim and Christian clergymen—all eager to honour the memory of the great Lebanese who had given the whole of his hazardous and hard life to his people

For two years, ever since June 25, 1959, the day of his unlawful arrest in Damascus, honest people in Lebanon and

the other Arab countries, and with them progressives the world over had fought for Farajallah Helu's release Little had they suspected that the leader of the Lebanese Communists had died at the hands of his torturers in the Damascus Criminal Investigation Department on the night following his arrest Their efforts, nevertheless, were not wasted They helped to promote the cause for which he fought thirty years and for which he gave his life That is how it always is a Communist's death for his ideals strengthens his comrades' devotion to them and draws countless more people into the struggle for a bright future for all mankind and peace in the world

One after another the speakers mounted the makeshift stand in the middle of the village The crowd of twenty thousand heard men prominent in Lebanese affairs—Edmond Aun, secretary of the Farajallah Helu World Defence Committee, Ahmad Azbar, parliamentary deputy George Hanna, writer, and Artin Madoyan Farajallah Helu s closest friend—review the life of the martyred hero and nail his assassins to the pillory of shame

Many of those present had known Farajallah Helu from childhood At his side they had received their first baptism in class struggle, fought against the French and British imperialists, served prison terms, and celebrated Lebanon's Independence Day Now revived for them was the whole valiant path of this unostentatious selfless fighter for the people's interests

Let us join them in recalling the landmarks of his noble life inseverably linked with the activities of the Party he helped to lead for a quarter of a century

* * *

Farajallah Helu was born in 1906 into a poor peasant's family Those were hard times for the ordinary people of Lebanon A province of the Ottoman Empire, its population

was deprived of the fruits of its labour by the feudals and the Turkish overlords Thousands of Lebanese went overseas to improve their lot Farajallah s two elder brothers and mother left their homeland Farajallah, three years old then, remained with his father and was looked after by his elder sister

Lebanon in those years was the scene of violent upheav als Along with their Syrian brothers, the Lebanese rose against Turkish domination In 1915, the leaders of the national liberation movement were executed in Beirut s cent ral square, later renamed Square of Martyred Fighters It was then that Farajallah first heard of the men and women who were giving their lives for freedom

Farajallah's childhood was anything but happy and care free Describing his schooldays in his autobiographical notes, he said "The village school was quite close to our home and I was made to attend it at a very early age What a school! Our classroom was bare of either desks or benches The pu pils would sit down on the floor and remain sitting there all day

"Only too well do I remember my first schoolmaster He was the village priest, a short ungainly man with a stentorian voice At his bench, the only seat in the classroom, he kept an assortment of lashes which he used freely to thrash on the backs of recalcitrant pupils There was also a special contraption, a wide board with holes for pinioning the arms, to which the worst offenders were bound and then severely flogged Their pleas for mercy were not heard I carried away from the school little in the way of learning But the taste of the floggings I shall never forget "

During the First World War the boy Farajallah shared the deprivations which fell to the lot of all the Lebanese poor Famine gripped the land Farajallah s father worked hard to feed the four children left in his care

Farajallah was soon transferred to the school in the Am shit township The schoolmaster was a young man, but the

same system of teaching with the rod prevailed He was an alert and intelligent boy, keen on his studies, and so popular with his schoolmates that he was elected president of the school's theatrical and debating society He read avidly and the boys enjoyed his accounts of the history of the Lebanese people and the Arabs' valiant resistance to the Crusaders and Turks

At this school he first came up against class distinction as a factor affecting the pupils' fates He recalls among his schoolmates a snob from a wealthy family with whom the teachers and principal sought to ingratiate themselves When this spoilt fat boy without a spark of talent was given the leading part in the Commencement Day play, the school was in an uproar and a strike was led by Farajallah "Fearing scandal," Farajallah wrote later, 'the school principal com plied with our demand but from then on he regarded me with suspicion and no matter how well I did in my studies the marks I got were never above fair "

Farajallah's education was temporarily interrupted when his elder brother wrote from America that he was out of a job and could no longer contribute to the family's support Fa rajallah now tried to find a job himself, which with wide spread unemployment in the country was not easy After a long search he finally procured a clerk's position on an estate near Banias But he was soon fired by the manager for daring to intercede on behalf of the farm labourers who worked in the hot sun fourteen hours a day for a miserable wage

In the meantime, Lebanon witnessed great changes No sooner had the land cast off the age old Turkish yoke than it found itself under French domination In 1920, French mandatory rule was established in Lebanon

During the years that followed Farajallah Helu was a village schoolmaster The destiny of his people weighed heav ily on his mind He perused the Egyptian press which posed in all its acuteness the problem of national liberation

The anti imperialist uprising which broke out in Syria

in 1925 met with Farajallah Helu's deepest sympathy In discussing politics with his fellow teachers and friends he hotly defended Arab sovereignty

Eager to continue his education, Farajallah Helu gladly accepted the post offered him in 1929 to teach Arabic in the junior grades of a secondary school at Homs in Syria This was a stroke of luck, for it gave him the possibility to re sume even if at the age of twenty three, his own interrupted studies His desire for knowledge, tenacity and perseverance sped his progress

During this period he first began to read Marxist litera ture 'I tried discussing political and social problems with my colleagues, but they showed no interest " he recalled "Is it possible that I shall resemble them after receiving my teacher s diploma?" he asked himself

Something now occurred which greatly affected Farajal lah Helu's future He chanced upon a French weekly magazine with an article on V I Lenin by P Chal, the French histo rian Reading this first installment of Lenin s life and acti vities," he related, "made my heart beat faster I knew what course I had to take " After a painstaking search he managed to collect the scattered copies of the French magazine and the full story of Lenin s life These copies he kept hidden away from the prying eyes of the police

"During the summer holidays I reread the articles again and again," Helu wrote later I would hunt up the French words in the dictionary lest I miss some shade of meaning in the text It still remained for me to find out how communist ideas could be popularised in our Arab countries But I had grasped the main thing—to be a revolutionary, one has to be brave patient and cool headed like Lenin "

Farajallah Helu now resolved to dedicate himself to the revolutionary struggle and fight for the liberation of the Lebanese people from colonial oppression

The early thirties were marked by a rise in the national liberation and working class movements in Syria and Leba

non The world economic crisis had drastically lowered the living standards of the people Dissatisfaction with French colonial rule in the countries of the Levant grew among the patriotic forces

In 1931, at Homs, Farajallah Helu met Khaled Bagdash, a leader of the Damascus branch of the Syrian Communist Party The two men became lifelong friends and comrades This was the year, too, when Helu joined the Syrian Com munist Party He founded a Party branch in his native town of Jubeil and was elected its secretary

Communist groups had come into existence in Lebanon as early as 1924 In October of that year they had amalgam ated to form a Communist Party known as the Communist Party of Syria (C P S) * In July 1925, upon the outbreak of the anti imperialist uprising in Syria, the Communist Party was outlawed Its leaders were arrested or exiled The Party went underground but did not relax its activities

The 1st Congress of the Communist Party of Syria was held in 1930 It issued a manifesto calling for the sovereign ty of Syria and Lebanon, the establishment of a workers and peasants' government, the adoption of labour laws, confis cation of the feudalist and foreign owned land and its appor tionment among the peasants

Farajallah Helu joined the Party at a trying moment, when it was striving to rid itself of the opportunists and sectarians who had wormed their way into the Party leader ship These elements failed to see the need for working in closer contact with the masses, and so making the Commun ist Party of Syria a truly revolutionary force of the people Together with Khaled Bagdash, Nikola Shawi and Artin Madoyan, Farajallah Helu successfully passed this first grave test of the revolutionary struggle The Party was purged

* The Communists and other adherents of the national liberation movement in Syria and Lebanon opposed Lebanon s separation with the status of a French Mandate from Syria and regarded Syria and Lebanon as one state at that time

of alien elements, and sectarian errors were severely criticised at the 1933 Plenary Meeting of the Communist Party of Syria This meeting set the Communists of Syria and Lebanon the task of rallying the masses to the fight for the country's emancipation from foreign domination

From the very outset of his Party work, Farajallah Helu kept in close touch with the masses After organising the Jubeil branch, he went on to other areas, and soon came to be known among the workers and peasants of Beirut, Tarablys, Alep, Damascus and other cities and rural areas in both Syria and Lebanon as a tireless and ardent communist propagandist With time there grew in him an unshakeable conviction that the peoples of Syria, Lebanon and all the Arab countries shared a common destiny and that they must fight side by side for their liberation and for real unity and brotherhood

The Lebanese working class movement reached a new pitch in the thirties A communist periodical called the *Sawt al Amal* (Workers Voice) appeared Under the influence of the Communists the workers came out with political as well as economic claims

In March 1931, Beirut workers, joined by patriotic bourgeois circles, boycotted the Franco Belgian Electric and Tram Car Company They demanded a reduction of fares and electricity rates Their struggle and demonstrations lasted three months The company was compelled to comply A big strike of railwaymen and Iraqi Petroleum Company workers broke out in 1932 Printers went on strike the following year and won the right to a legal union

Farajallah Helu first visited the Soviet Union in 1934 He toured the republics of Central Asia The scale of socialist construction in the USSR impressed him immensely But most of all he was struck by the achievements of the peoples of the Central Asian republics which, thanks to the Great October Revolution, were precipitated from backward medieval feudalism into the new era of socialist construction He

published his impressions in *New People Build a New World*, a book put out in Beirut in 1937

Continuing in the thick of the workers' struggle Farajallah Helu organised demonstrations and other forms of strife in defence of the workers rights He fought above all for the adoption of labour laws and removal of restrictions on the trade unions

In 1934, the Communist Party of Syria began to publish *Nidal ash Sha'ab* (The People's Struggle), an illegal newspaper One of its founders and editors was Farajallah Helu In 1935, he was elected to the Central Committee of the C P S

The struggle for national liberation gained new momentum in Syria and Lebanon in 1936 The historic fifty day strike which began on January 20 in Damascus culminated in victory for the patriotic forces A promise was wrested from the French government to start negotiating with the Syrian government on independence for Syria A similar promise was given to the Lebanese government

Active as ever on the front lines of the struggle Farajallah Helu began to organise demonstrations in Damascus against the French colonialists At one of them he was arrested and after being kept in custody for two weeks was deported under convoy to Lebanon, the French authorities forbidding him to set foot on Syrian territory again

The rapid spread of the movement for national independence and the Party's policy of united front with all the anti imperialist forces of both countries did much to raise its prestige and influence on the people In 1936, the Syrian Communist Party began to function on a legal basis It organised demonstrations, called meetings, published leaflets and appeals as well as did active work inside the trade unions Its leaders kept in constant touch with the top rungs of the nationalist parties and the government After the conclusion in November 1936 of the Franco Lebanese Treaty which provided for the abolition of the French mandate

three years after the Treaty came into force Riad Solh, the prominent Lebanese politician, later many times Prime Minister, publicly thanked the leaders of the Communist Party for their aid to the government in bring ing the negotiations with France to a successful finish

Farajallah Helu in 1932

A National Convention of the C P S was held in March, 1937, at Damascus where Khaled Bagdash was elected the General Secreta ry of its Central Committee and Farajallah Helu one of its secretaries That same year saw the publication of the newspaper *Sawt ash Sha'ab* (People's Voice), a semi legal organ of the Communist Party Farajallah Helu was its editor and like a true patriot made it the mouthpiece of the people's vital interests He urged all the patriotic forces of the land to unite and fight for the abolition of the French mandate and for independence He stressed the im portance of the working class joining hands with all the peo ple of the land to win democratic and, above all, trade union freedoms He exposed Italo German fascism as a menace to the Arab people as well as to the nations of the whole world He made such fascist organisations in Syria and Lebanon as Antun Sa'ada's Nationalist Party in Syria and the Pha lange in Lebanon the butt of his continual attacks

Farajallah Helu was co organiser with Antun Thabet, ar chitect and prominent Lebanese public figure of the Anti Fascist and Anti Nazi League founded in 1939 Speaking for the Communist Party, Farajallah Helu resolutely con

demned French and Turkish plans to separate the Sandjak of Alexandretta from Syria (1937 1939)

No sooner had the Second World War begun than the French heaped reprisals on the Syrian and Lebanese Communists Even before that, in January 1939, the French Parliament had refused to ratify the treaties with Lebanon and Syria on the abolition of the mandate The High Commissioner in Syria and Lebanon issued a decree outlawing the Communist Party of Syria and suppressing the newspaper *Sawt ash Sha ab* The Communist Party went underground Many of its members were arrested Farajallah Helu was jailed, as was Nikola Shawi, also a Secretary of the Central Committee of the C P S Khaled Bagdash went into hiding

At the trial of the Communists Farajallah Helu made a stirring speech in defence of the Party and its patriotic platform

"We Communists," he declared, "are the truest and staunchest fighters for the people's interests Neither torture nor prison sentences can make us betray our convictions We are intrepid foes of fascism and of all aggression and war And we are on trial because we support the sovereignty of Syria and Lebanon, because we are friends of the Soviet Union, the bastion and hope of all mankind in the fight against fascism!"

Farajallah Helu and his comrades were sentenced to five years' imprisonment and huge fines

France capitulated in June 1940 and the colonial authorities in Syria and Lebanon declared their support of the Vichy government In July 1941, the British army and the Free French troops drove the Vichy puppet rulers out of Syria and Lebanon And now the anti fascist nature of the war and the desire to win the people over to their side compelled the allies to put into effect certain democratic measures, among them release of the jailed Communists in the countries of the Levant

After twenty two months in the prisons of Beirut, Baabda

and Bait ad Din Farajallah Helu, Nikola Shawi and other Communists threw themselves into Party work with redoub led zeal Farajallah Helu proceeded to edit the Party newspa per The activities of the Anti Fascist and Anti Nazi League were renewed In 1941, it began the publication of *At Tariq*, a periodical which became widely popular throughout the Arab East The General Trade Union Federation of Work ers and Employees was organised in Lebanon in 1943 with Mustafa Aris, a Communist, as its leader Societies of Friend ship with the Soviet Union sprang up in Syria and Lebanon Farajallah Helu frequently published articles on Soviet Arab friendship in which he paid tribute to the Soviet people's heroic performance in the war against fascist Germany On the initiative of the Communist Party and the progressive organisations of Lebanon, a relief campaign was launched to collect money and send packages for the Soviet fighting men

The Second World War gave the struggle for independence in Lebanon fresh impetus In 1941 General Catroux appoint ed the Free French Delegate General in the Levant countries, proclaimed the independence of Syria and Lebanon Under pressure of the popular movement, the French began nego tiations with Lebanese spokesmen on the projected struc ture of the country's administration In March 1943 the French agreed to restore the Constitution and to allow parliamentary elections

The parliamentary elections of August 1943 were won by the candidates of the national bourgeoisie and landowning circles backed by Britain, which was counting on their help in ousting the French from Syria and Lebanon A few Com munists ran for parliament, too but did not gain seats Fa rajallah Helu polled 12,000 votes as the candidate for Anti Lebanon

A struggle for complete political independence was now begun by the new parliament and government It was sup ported by broad sections of the population Farajallah Helu,

acting on instructions of the Party, established contact with the national parties to cooperate with them in the fight for independence A National Congress of Political Parties and Organisations was formed, with Farajallah Helu represent ing the Communist Party

On November 22, 1943, after a severe political crisis lasting a fortnight the Lebanese people succeeded in making France lift the remaining restrictions which stood in the way of the country's independence The struggle now passed on to a new phase—the fight for the withdrawal of French and British troops from Lebanese territory and against Brit ain s designs to impose her domination on Lebanon

At the 2nd Congress of the Communist Party of Syria convened at Beirut from December 31 1943 to January 2, 1944, Habib Abu Shahla was a guest of honour representing the Lebanese government His presence testified to the of ficial recognition of the outstanding services rendered by the Communist Party in the Lebanese people's fight for inde pendence Farajallah Helu spoke on organisational questions A resolution was adopted at the Congress to set up a separate Lebanese Communist Party (C P L) Farajallah Helu was elected Secretary of the C C of C P L

In its manifesto the Lebanese Communist Party warmly congratulated the Lebanese people on gaining their sovereign ty It pointed out that their victory was the fruit of the va liant struggle of all the patriotic forces of Lebanon The Com munist Party now saw its cardinal task in rallying the na tional front forces to fight for the evacuation of foreign troops and complete political independence Its demands were di rected towards improving the economic position of the work ing people, restricting the sway of the big bourgeoisie and feudal landlords and getting the national economy out of the grip of foreign capital

In the course of 1944 1946, the movement for the withdraw al of foreign troops from Lebanon made further headway and the Lebanese Communist Party worked unflaggingly to coor

dinate the people s efforts It organised a drive for solidarity with fraternal Syria when in May 1945 the French resorted to armed suppression of the fighters for Syria's independence and poured the fire of their artillery and aircraft on the peaceful population of Damascus Strikes and protest demonstrations swept Lebanon The Communist Party was active too in forming youth squads to resist the colonialists

In the summer of 1945 France had to yield to the pressure of the masses and turn over to the governments of Syria and Lebanon the so called *Troupes Speciales* numbering over 25 000 Syrian and Lebanese soldiers Thanks to the intercession of the Soviet Union in the Security Council the colonialists' plans to prolong their stay in Syria and Lebanon were foiled The evacuation of foreign troops from the territory of these two countries began early in 1946 and was completed in December 1946

When at last the Lebanese people embarked on their independent existence they found many grave problems staring them in the face Economically Lebanon was still dominated by the French colonialists The American and British monopolies were vying for their influence in Lebanon Even after the evacuation of the foreign troops, foreign investments came to ninety per cent of the total capital investments in the country's economy

Those who held the political power in Lebanon were the comprador bourgeoisie, the feudal lords and the influential ecclesiastical circles It was in their interests that Lebanon continue to be dependent on foreign capital and that they should go on playing the customary role of commercial go betweens of the Arab countries with the West

The popular movement against the supremacy of foreign capital, for the development of the native industries and improvement of the workers' conditions was ruthlessly suppressed In June 1946, gunfire met a demonstration of strikers from the Reji de Taba tobacco monopoly The *Sawt ash Sha'ab* was banned for denouncing the actions of the govern

ment That newspaper was closed down three times in 1946 It became a common occurrence for meetings called by the Communist Party or other progressive organisations to be obstructed by the police Leaders of the Lebanese and Syrian Communist Parties faced trial in December for publishing a statement against imperialist schemes in the Arab East

The new Lebanese government headed by Riad Solh tried to lay the blame for the deplorable state of the country's economy on the progressives Solh made an anti communist speech in parliament on November 25, 1947 The reactionary press took it for a green light to start an anti communist campaign The growing international tension over Palestine was played up to the same ends

Police and reactionary nationalist elements raided the communist headquarters on January 8, 1948 A bill was pas sed outlawing communist activities and the newspaper *Sawt ash Sha'ab* was closed down for good

Nevertheless the Lebanese people kept up the fight for their rights The strike movement spread Although working illegally, the Communist Party continued to head the working people's struggles

In 1948, the outlawed Syrian and Lebanese Parties were re amalgamated organisationally to form one Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon (C P S and L) Helu was elected to the Central Committee With Khaled Bagdash, Nikola Shawi and other well tried leaders he worked all out to con solidate the Party ranks

After the long period of legal work (1941 1947), the tran sition to illegal standing created certain complications in side the Party A section of the membership, chiefly from intellectuals and petty bourgeois circles, was intimidated by the reactionary onslaught and proved incapable of carrying on revolutionary work in the new conditions The Party leadership was forced to take a firm stand and expel such elements as Hashim al Amin, Kadri Kalaji, Kashad Isa and Emilia Fares Ibrahim from its ranks

The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon, held at the end of 1948, gave a decisive rebuff to the opportunists and capitulators who tried to make the Party deviate from the Marxist Leninist line Its resolution stressed that the Party must pay more attention to the agrarian question, and demanded the confiscation of feudal lands for distribution among the peasants The Party now vigorously exposed the designs of the United States and British imperialists in the Arab East It urged the people to promote solidarity and cooperation with the Soviet Union which by its deeds had demonstrated its unselfish friendship for the Arabs

During the military dictatorship of Husni Az Za'im in Syria (March-August 1945) the Communist Party, undaunted by terror, unmasked this dictator's secret deal with the United States giving the American Trans Arabian Pipe Line Company a concession for a gas pipe line to be laid from Saudi Arabia through the territory of Syria Despite the numerous arrests of its members, the Party continued working among the masses and considerably extended its influence

The period of 1948 1949 saw the Party purge its ranks of opportunists and wavering elements and its membership become more seasoned in struggle At about this time, too, a number of Marxist works were translated into Arabic The Party took part in the campaign for the October 1949 elections to the Constituent Assembly of Syria and framed the draft of a democratic constitution, giving it wide publicity among the masses In the course of this election campaign the Party came into the open and began working legally for the first time since its suppression late in 1947 and the beginning of 1948

Another major step to broaden the scope of the Party's work among the masses was undertaken in January 1951 The Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon called a Plenary Meeting and Khaled Bagdash, General Secretary of the Central Committee, made a report stressing the necessity

of the Party drawing more workers and peasants into its ranks To date the work of the Party he said, had been confined to a petty bourgeois environment to intellectuals, to the youth and students, much effort was wasted and propaganda was sometimes made an end in itself A resolution was adopted to radically reorganise Party work, widen the influence of the Party among the workers and peasants, change the form and content of propaganda and agitational work and strengthen the Party's leading cadres

At this Plenary Meeting an assessment was made of the social forces at work in Syria and Lebanon and the Communist Party's position in relation to those forces defined Again the role of the working class in the struggle was stressed, and the peasant question thoroughly analysed the stratification within the peasantry, the forms of feudal exploitation, the development of capitalist relations in the country side

It was pointed out that imperialism and its agents, the feudalists and the comprador bourgeoisie, were the main foes of the people in the present phase of the struggle In view of this the Plenary Meeting charted the only correct road for the victory of the national revolution militant unity of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the working class and its party, round which the broad masses as well as considerable sections of the national bourgeoisie would rally The Plenary Meeting instructed all Party organisations to work for such unity

Supported by the workers and peasants the Communist Party now lined up in a united front with the national bourgeoisie in the Lebanese parliamentary elections of 1951 and in the nationwide campaign against the imperialists' designs to set up a Middle East Command At the elections the Communists formed a bloc with the anti imperialist section of the national bourgeoisie

In Syria even the dictatorial Shishakli regime established at the end of 1951 failed to paralyse the Party's activ

ties Work among the masses continued and anti imperialist demonstrations were held jointly with representatives of the national bourgeoisie The Party was especially active among the peasants Peasant congresses were convened in the Jezir and Latakia areas and special peasant newspapers were pub lished The Party led workers' strikes at Damascus, Haleb, Homs Banias and other cities

In Lebanon the Communist Party did its utmost to expose the corrupt regime of Bishar al Huri who was re elected in 1949 for a second term as President of Lebanon and had aligned himself with American imperialism It actively particip ated in the mass demonstrations which brought about his downfall in September 1952 The Communist Party, too, censured severely the regime of Camile Chamoun, who, on succeeding Bishar al Huri as president, did not keep any of his promises to improve the living standards of the people Chamoun continued the policies which served the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie and feudal lords and the country grew even more dependent on the imperialist powers

At the end of 1953 and the beginning of 1954, the resist ance of the Syrian population to the Shishakli regime increa sed and the democratic movement in Lebanon, too, gained momentum Led by Sultan al Atrash the Druses rebelled in Syria The armed suppression of this rebellion roused a na tionwide movement against the existing dictatorship

It was in this atmosphere of brewing discontent that in January and February 1954 the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon issued an appeal for a united National Front to fight for national democratic governments in both Syria and Lebanon The Party made it clear that it would support such governments whether its own members held office in them or not

When the Shishakli dictatorship was overthrown in Feb ruary 1954, representatives of the big bourgeoisie and land owners oriented mainly on Britain and Iraq, came into power But even they were compelled to take certain steps towards

democratisation They restored constitutional rule, and the parliament elected in 1949 renewed its work after having been suspended for two years Preparations began for the new parliamentary elections The Communist Party was allowed to work legally

Farajallah Helu was again in Syria He helped organise democratic trade unions at Damascus, Homs and Haleb and assiduously pursued the Party line of strengthening its ties with the masses and promoting a national anti imperial ist front

Having no legal status, the Communist Party campaigned for parliament on the ticket of the National Union of Syria The latter urged all other national parties and organisations to rally around it An electoral platform drawn up by the Central Committee of the Party demanded non alignment with imperialist military blocs or schemes, a patriotic for eign policy founded on solidarity with all peoples fighting for national liberation and peace, implementation of an ag rarian reform, an eight hour working day and the right to organise democratic trade unions

This platform was approved at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon in August 1954 At this meeting special emphasis was put on cooperation during the election campaign with the parties of the national bourgeoisie It was pointed out that Syria was still going through a phase of national de mocratic liberation It was, therefore, not faced as yet with the problem of transition to socialism Talk of socialism as our immediate aim at the present time,' said the reso lution of the Plenary Meeting, can only distort the meaning of socialism, lead to a split in the national democratic forces, and distract the people's attention from the urgency of unit ing their forces against imperialism, feudalism and reaction "

The parliamentary elections held in September and Octo ber 1954 testified to the growing national consciousness of the Syrian people, their resolve to continue the struggle and

fortify their national independence against imperialist in roads The majority of the votes went to the candidates who stood for a peaceful, independent foreign policy and prog ressive domestic reforms

Khaled Bagdash General Secretary of the Central Com mittee of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon was elected to parliament from Damascus The Com- munist candidates polled more than 50,000 votes in the elections

Summing up the election results the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon stated "Our Party has come out of the election campaign with an im portant victory, increased its membership and extended its political influence " The C C urged all the Communists of Syria to further strengthen the Party's links with the masses who had rallied around the Party during the election cam paign

Farajallah Helu was in Damascus during the election cam paign He helped to draw up all the Party documents He wrote articles explaining the Party platform at this impor tant juncture in Syria's history

Between 1954 and 1957, the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon was reaching the masses even more effectively in both countries In Lebanon its activities were mainly di rected at unmasking the reactionary policy of the ruling classes, that is the comprador bourgeoisie and the feudalists who sought to turn Lebanon into a vassal of American im perialism, in Syria the Party had greater possibilities of working closely with the masses and intensifying the strug gle against imperialism, for progressive domestic changes The fact that the Party had its own deputy in the Syrian parliament was vastly important This deputy was Khaled Bagdash, a fiery speaker who propagated the ideas of the Syrian Communists from the rostrum of parliament and ex posed the imperialists and the reactionary forces inside the country

The democratic forces of Syria, with the active partici pation of the Communist Party, were now strong enough to make the Syrian government officially decline to enter into any imperialist military alignments, such as the Turko Iraq Bloc or the Baghdad Pact, and to reject the Eisenhower Doctrine" The government turned down the fettering offers of 'aid' from the western powers and re affirmed its anti imperialist foreign policy Syria took part in the Bandung Conference and became one of the most consistent supporters of the Bandung principles in international affairs It was on a foundation of equality and mutual advantage that rela tions developed between Syria and the Soviet Union as well as the other socialist countries A trade and payments treaty was concluded between Syria and the USSR in 1955 followed in 1957 by en agreement on economic and technical cooper ation In 1956, an agreement to promote Soviet-Syrian cul tural contacts was signed

The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon, held at Damascus in April and May 1956, analysed the situation obtaining in Syria and mapped the further course of the Party and the entire anti imperialist democratic movement of the land

This Plenary Meeting welcomed the decisions of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and stressed their great historical significance for advancing the development of Marxist Leninist theory

It noted that the existing situation in Syria, given the continuation and consolidation of its independent foreign policy and the implementation of progressive democratic changes at home, was favourable to radical reforms that would pave the way for the country to go over to the peace ful development of socialism

At this Meeting the Party line on the National Front was further clarified It was pointed out that such a front could "unite all the national democratic forces of the land, namely the working class, peasantry and middle peasants,

rural bourgeoisie, middle class in the towns, the national bourgeoisie, and the national intelligentsia "

What made it possible to pursue an independent anti imperialist foreign policy in Syria and to implement democ ratic domestic reforms over the period of 1954 1957 was the growing political consciousness of the masses and their ener getic participation in public life At every crucial moment the people actively supported those undertakings of the govern ment which served the national interests and resolutely thwarted the designs of the reactionary forces Of paramount importance was the role of the masses during the triple imperialist aggression against Egypt in 1956, and the rebuff given the American Turkish provocations on Syria s north ern borders in 1957 Mass vigilance helped to uncover count less plots against the state by the imperialists and their agents in 1956 and 1957

The Party sent Farajallah Helu to Moscow with a delega tion in November 1957 to attend the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution and the Conference of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties Speaking at the celebration meeting on behalf of the Syrian and Lebanese Communists, Farajallah Helu warmly thanked the Soviet Union for its unselfish economic aid to Syria and its help in obviating the danger of imperialist aggression No power on earth " he said, 'can destroy the friendship of the Syrian people and the Soviet Union All honest patriots in our land, irrespective of their party affiliations or social status, are convinced that this friendship is decisive in preserving the independence of Syria and promoting her advancement "

A Government of National Unity was formed in Syria at the end of 1956 It was supported in parliament by a National Front including representatives of the Communist Party The Party line of setting up a National Front was thus carried into life Syria now faced the bright prospect of independent national democratic development

Such a road for Syria was not to the liking of the imperialists and reactionaries The imperialist powers, and first and foremost the United States, put into motion their entire propaganda machine to mislead world public opinion on the situation in Syria, not even stopping at such a lie as to call Syria a "communist state" and a 'Soviet base" in the Near East

The policy of the Syrian Communists was meeting with the approval of the overwhelming majority of the nation With a view to setting up a national anti imperialist front and consolidating the independence of the land, they worked in close cooperation with all patriotic and anti imperialist forces including the national bourgeoisie

But a section of Syria's ruling clique, influenced by imperialist propaganda and prompted by their own narrow class interests, began to seek ways of stemming the growing tide of the popular movement and restraining the democratic forces

Under the circumstances, the Syrian government saw a way out in the country completely merging with Egypt into a single state which entailed the dissolution of Syrian political parties In February 1958, the United Arab Republic was proclaimed

The January 1958 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon pointed out that the aspirations of the Arab peoples to unite were progressive and were predicated by the entire course of Arab history At the same time its resolutions stressed that the long separation of the Arab people resulting from artificial walls raised between them by the imperialist powers led to the appearance of specific features in the life of each people which had to be kept in mind when a single Arab state was formed Such a union, if it were to be lasting, would have to rest on the firm foundation of unflagging struggle by the Arab peoples against imperialism Furthermore, it would have to be carried out on a democratic and voluntary basis,

preserving the democratic gains and rights of each people and taking into consideration the concrete objective condi tions obtaining in each country that joined the union Only then could the new state withstand the pressure of imperial ism and internal reaction

Weighing all these factors the Plenary Meeting of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon, while fundamentally approving the union of Syria and Egypt, urged the govern ment of Syria to study the question carefully before taking the final decision on the form of the union

Needless to say, the well substantiated and sound pro posals of the Communist Party were ignored by Syria's lead ing circles *

The Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon held a Ple nary Meeting in November 1958 at which the situation ob taining in Syria after her union with Egypt was analysed and a new political programme adopted In order to consolidate the unity and independence of the United Arab Republic, the Communist Party proposed that the Syrian Egyptian union be reorganised on a sound democratic foundation Un der the changed conditions resulting from the emergence of the United Arab Republic, the Plenary Meeting decided to divide the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon into two separate parties the Communist Party of Syria and the Communist Party of Lebanon A secretariat of the Central Committee of the Lebanese Communist Party was elected with Farajallah Helu as one of its members

When the United Arab Republic was proclaimed Fara jallah Helu was in Damascus He helped to frame the deci-

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* The future course of events showed that the misgivings of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon were well founded Two and a half years later the social and economic reforms carried out by the United Arab Republic clashed with the interests of the Syrian feudals As the democratic forces were disorganised and the imperialist and Arab reactionaries stood behind them they easily engineered a coup d etat in Syria and made her secede from the United Arab Republic in September 1961

sions at the Plenary Meeting of the C C of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon In May 1958, upon the out break of the anti imperialist rising in Lebanon the Party sent him to Beirut Here he helped organise fighting squads of Lebanese patriots for resistance to the American interven tionists who had landed on the Lebanese coast to support at the point of their bayonets the Chamoun Malik pro imperi alist regime In its leaflets and manifestoes the Communist Party urged the Lebanese people to oust the American in cursionists from Lebanese territory

Farajallah Helu returned to Damascus at the end of 1958 He attended the November Plenary Meeting of the C C of the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon, and helped to organise the Party's work in the new illegal conditions after its suppression in Syria Early in 1959, he took a short trip to Beirut

On the business of the Party Farajallah Helu returned to Damascus clandestinely on June 25, 1959 Taking the usual precautions, he made his way to the Party's secret meeting place He was never seen again

News of Farajallah Helu's arrest spread like wildfire through Syria and Lebanon and then the rest of the world The newspapers reported that he was being brutally tortured and that his life was in danger A World Farajallah Helu Defence Committee was formed at Beirut The Soviet public was represented on that Committee by Professor E A Koro vin Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Scien ces and the Soviet poet Rasul Gamzatov Its members also included eminent progressives like Mario Berlinguer, member of the Italian parliament, the French abbot Jean Boulier, the Indian lawyer Daniel Latifi, Ion Tackman, a Sweedish doctor, Enrico Fialho, Argentine lawyer and a number of well known Lebanese public figures

The worldwide campaign for the release of Farajallah Helu continued for two years Conflicting reports emanated from Damascus to the effect that Farajallah Helu had been seen in

a police wagon passing through the streets, that he was at Mezse prison and so on

At the end of May 1961, the Communist Party of Lebanon learned that Farajallah Helu had died of monstrous tortures in a cell of the Criminal Investigation Department at Damas cus This news was made public on May 29 1961 And about a year after Syria's secession from the United Arab Repu blic in September 1961, on the insistence of the Lebanese people and Farajallah Helu's family, the Syrian government began an inquiry into the circumstances of Helu s death The results of this inquiry are summarised in the following *

Early in 1959, a provocateur by the name of Subhi el Habl, an ex Party member, informed the Damascus police of the address of the Party's secret meeting place in that city and the password Police agents were immediately dispatched to the spot Farajallah Helu appeared at the door of this secret address at about 8 p m on June 25, 1959, was seized then and there, and brought to the Criminal Investigation Depart ment on ar Raunda Street

The prisoner was first questioned by Naasan Zakkar, one of the top officials of the Department Pretending to be friendly, he offered Helu a cup of coffee and began talking about politics Soon he changed his tone Pointing to a bunch of keys found on Helu's person, he demanded "How did you come by these keys and what doors do they open?"

Farajallah did not answer Again and again he was quest ioned on the meeting places of the Party and on the work of the Syrian Communists but without result Zakkar then ordered the guards to beat him As before, the prisoner was silent

When he saw that his efforts to make Helu talk were getting him nowhere, Zakkar rang for his superior Abd al Wahab al Khatib, the chief of the political department of

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* They were published in the Beirut newspaper *An Nida* on August 17, 1962

the Syrian secret police That sadist could not contain his pleasure over the news of Helu's arrest

"Good work, boys, you've bagged big game today," he said, and proceeded himself to question the arrested man with no better success

Infuriated, he began to manhandle Helu and then passed the job on to his toughs All efforts to make the prisoner speak were futile

At this point Rafiq Rida, a renegade who had betrayed the Party and sold his services as an "expert" to the secret police, was called in He advised Helu "for his own good" to give the police the desired information and sign a disavowal of his communist convictions

"It's no use being stubborn, Farajallah," he said "We've known each other for a long time and I really wish you well Make a clean breast of everything, sign a recantation and the tortures will cease and you will be released "

Farajallah Helu spat in the face of the traitor

"Shut up, you wretch! Nothing will ever make me betray my brothers I would rather die than renounce the ideals to which I have given thirty years of my life I am and will always remain a Communist!"

The torture was resumed with fresh gusto The prisoner was beaten with clubs and iron rods, trampled upon, electric currents sent through his body When he fainted he was brought back to his senses with buckets of water so that his torturers could go on with their work Helu endured it all with remarkable fortitude

A member of the department staff warned Hatib that heart pills had been found on the person of the prisoner and that they had better go easy The maddened beasts paid no attention to this warning

In the early hours of the morning, enraged and exhausted, Hatib went home leaving orders to make Farajallah Helu speak at any cost Vajih Antaki, a new torturer, took over But nothing could break the will of the Communist Fara

The family of Farajallah Helu

jallah Helu At seven o'clock in the morning of June 26 1959 after ten hours of this savage treatment, the noble heart of the valiant Communist ceased to beat

The inquiry's disclosures on how the assassins tried to hide the traces of their crime are most sickening to read The body was hastily concealed on the premises of the Cri minal Investigation Department The utmost caution was taken not to rouse the suspicions of other prisoners or the warders Racking their brains what to do next, the assassins rang up Sarraj, Minister of Internal Affairs in the Syrian de partment of the United Arab Republic He advised them to lose no time in covering up the crime

That night Farajallah Helu's murderers had the body furtively removed and buried near the village of Dair Salman, on a suburban estate belonging to one of their number But now they feared the dead Farajallah Helu no less than the living, and kept secret watch over his grave When a world drive for Farajallah Helu's release was launched, an order arrived to obliterate every vestige of the crime and destroy

Helu's remains His cowardly murderers were only too pleased to carry out this order

A few days later, Sarraj, the Minister of the Interior, received an official inquiry from Cairo regarding Farajallah Helu After "investigating" the matter, the Minister inform ed the government of the United Arab Republic that "a man by the name of Farajallah Helu had once been forbidden entry into Syria, was not known to have re appeared on Syrian territory, and was not in Syria at the given moment "

In this way an "official" version was concocted with the help of which the perpetrators of Helu's murder hoped to escape responsibility for it Today, however, their guilt has been established beyond a doubt

For four days from June 1 to June 4 1961, all of Leba non seethed with popular indignation after the news of the murder became known Thousands of people marched to the home of Farajallah Helu to condole with his bereaved widow and three little daughters Wreath upon wreath was laid beside Helu's picture framed in mourning Members of parliament, prominent public figures, writers, journalists, clericals and countless friends and comrades in arms went to Fara jallah Helu's home to give voice to their protest against the heinous crime which had been perpetrated in Damascus and to their solidarity with the cause for which he gave his life

From Moscow came a message of condolences to the Le banese Communist Party from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Messages of condolences arrived from every nook and corner of the earth, their number running into thousands

"My husband met his death at the hands of a foreign hangman," wrote the widow of Julius Fuçik to Helu's wife "He died before he was even forty because he fought for the people's freedom and happiness I will never cease to grieve for him but I believe that my husband did not die in vain

"Dear Madame Helu, I believe, too, that the death of your husband will help to open the eyes of many people of

good will the world over, and that a storm of wrath and indignation will descend upon those who are to blame for this monstrous crime "

Standing beside the picture of her dead husband Virginia Helu made a solemn vow to the thousands assembled at the door of her home

Farajallah, trust me, I will be loyal to your people, your comrades your ideals which you taught me to love " rang the stirring words of that vow 'I will bring up your three children to be worthy of you and your ideals I swear to you before this great multitude of people who have arrived to pay their last respects to you that I will dedicate the whole of my life, as will your children, to the goal to which you devoted your life

The Communists of Lebanon and Syria, Communists and progressive minded people throughout the world will keep fresh the memory of Farajallah Helu, indomitable fighter for Communist ideals, for the future of his own people and of all mankind

Ruben Jaramillo

Ruben Jaramillo

Tell me lonely star on high
And dawn arrayed in purple mist
Did our Ruben have to die
Because he was a Communist?

Eraclio Zepeda Ballad of Ruben Jaramillo

Late in May 1962, a dust covered lorry jerked to a stop in front of a police station in the state of Morelos, Mexico The driver dashed straight into the office of the police chief Breathless he told him that the bodies of four murdered men and a woman were lying in a lane by the highway to Cuernavaca, about half a kilometre from the ruins of the Xochicalco Indian settlement The bodies were easily identified as those of Ruben Jaramillo, Mexican peasant leader and Communist, Epifania, his wife, also a Party member, and their three sons Ricardo, Filemon and Enrique members of the Young Communist League They were riddled by bullets And Epifania who was with child had been brutally shot through the abdomen several times

Such ghastly reprisals by the landowners and the caciques against militant fighters for the peasants' rights are no news to Mexicans For a long time now terror has

been rife in the Mexican countryside Bourgeois newspapers do not give this undeclared war much publicity They made no mention whatever of the assassination, much this same time, of two other peasant Communist leaders, Antonio Silva and Antonio Herrera, in the states of Puebla and Michoakan But it was impossible to hush up the foul murder of Jaramillo The news swept the country like wildfire, arousing indignation and resentment against the landowners and their political bosses who were responsible for the violent death of a staunch fighter for the happiness of the Mexican people Jaramillo was known throughout Mexico as the heroic champion of the age old aspirations of the deceived and poverty stricken peasantry of his land

Land and Freedom

Ruben Jaramillo was born in 1900 in Saqualpan a mining township in the state of Mexico Several years later his parents moved to Tlaciltenango village in Morelos, a state in the heart of Mexico which prides itself on its revolutionary traditions The spirit of the inhabitants of this small mountainous part of Mexico has been hardened by centuries of fighting, first against the Spanish conquerors and then against the landowners It is called in honour of Jose Maria Morelos, a national hero who fought for Mexico's independence and emancipation from slavery at the beginning of the century

It was in Morelos that Emiliano Zapata, the Mexican peasant leader, was born and performed his legendary exploits during the revolution of 1910 1917 The revolution took the form of a peasant war which swept away the bloody dictatorship of Dias and the hated rule of the landowners, bankers and foreign monopolies The landless peasants and small farmers mustered a voluntary army, put up their own talented generals, among them Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, and under their command launched an armed

struggle against the bourgeoisie which lusted for power Ruben Jaramillo was still a boy when he rallied to the banner of Zapata s freedom army and espoused the peasants' cause Zapata's motto 'Land and Freedom" became the watch word of his whole life

At the time of the revolution Mexico s working class was small in number and politically immature It had no party of its own and could not assume leadership of the peas antry Thus, after the Mexican revolution political power passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie which spared no pains to drown in blood the peasant movement The national heroes Zapata and Villa, whom the new rulers could not de feat in open battle, were murdered by hired thugs

Although the revolution of 1910 1917 did not result in people s rule, it marked a considerable step towards liberty, democracy and independence For one thing, it abolished the feudal privileges of the landowners, who could no longer treat the peasants as their chattels For another, the bour geois rulers promised to implement a reform by which the land was to be taken away from the big landowners and distributed among the peasants The workers, too, won the right to have unions and organise strikes

A new constitution came into force in 1917, reflecting these gains by the workers and peasants It promulgated universal suffrage and restored the natural resources approp riated by the foreign monopolies to the Mexican state Such democratic gains created favourable conditions for the work ers to organise, and in 1919 the Communist Party of Mexico was founded

After the revolution, with thousands of other fighters, Ruben Jaramillo exchanged the gun for the plough But as time went on, he and his fellow peasants learned from bit ter experience that the new rulers of the land, for all that they had passed democratic laws and were paying lip service to the ideas of the revolution, were in no hurry to turn the word to deed

The agrarian reform was being carried out slowly and incompetently The small peasants and farm labourers united under the *ejido** system were apportioned meagre plots of barren, practically unarable land And even these plots they were unable to farm because they had no money to buy seeds, no agricultural implements and draught animals, and no irrigation facilities To keep from starving they had to hire themselves into bondage again to the very landowners against whom they had fought in the revolution or the new rich who made their money by profiteering or graft And while millions of peasants received no land at all many of the big latifundia continued to exist, often hundreds of thousands of acres of land were concentrated in the hands of a single landowner

Discontent was brewing among the peasants and in the late twenties and early thirties peasant risings and farm labourers strikes shook the Mexican countryside When, however, a progressive government headed by President Cardenas (1934 1940) came into power, it began energetically implementing the agrarian reform The result was that 18,000 000 hectares of land were apportioned to millions of peasant families This was approximately as much land as had been handed over to the peasants by all the preceding governments taken together But after the war, distribution of land among the peasants was practically stopped ** A new group of landowners, mostly former government officials who managed to amass big fortunes, appeared on the scene They were contemptuously nicknamed "nylon land magnates" by the people for their eagerness to pattern their lives after the American plutocracy

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* E j i d o—village communal land In areas where the bourgeois forms of relations were more pronounced the *ejido* developed into a kind of capitalist cooperative in the backward parts of the country the *ejido* system has retained to this day its patriarchal features

** When the Lopez Mateos government came to office in 1958 it was compelled by the rising tide of peasant disturbances to step up somewhat the implementation of the agrarian reform

The peasants now tried to take their grievances to courts of law which they hoped would protect their interests But the judges, working hand in glove with the landowners kept suspending for years the suits brought against them

Ruben Jaramillo was an ordinary peasant who did not know much about politics Like most of the villagers he had put his faith in the "revolutionary" pledges of the rulers

But he was now beginning to realise that unless the peasants fought they would get no land, and that the landowners, old and new, would go on oppressing and exploiting them regardless of the laws of the country Together with his fellow villagers Ruben began a struggle for the rights of the peasants He showed outstanding ability as an organiser and leader of the masses The peasants were ready to swear by this resolute and fearless fighter for their interests and follow him through thick and thin The peasant demonstrations organised by Ruben Jaramillo infuriated the Mexican reacti onaries And the bourgeois press stopped at nothing to discre dit the peasant leader, it even branded him as a mere brigand

The Mexican bourgeoisie, still scared out of their wits by memories of the fierce resistance of the peasant army during the revolution, vented their spite on the more active and militant leaders of the peasant movement Ruben Jar amillo knew that dozens of peasant fighters had met their death at the hands of hired assassins or in the torture cham bers of the police Danger had stalked him, too, many a time and he had to fight for his life with gun in hand

Gradually it was borne in upon Jaramillo that isolated opposition required great personal sacrifices but did not lead to victory The peasants, he knew, must organise them selves for united political action There was no political party in Morelos, his native state, capable of defending the interests of the peasantry Most of the *ejidos* at Morelos

were controlled by the National Peasants' Association which obediently bowed to the will of the landowners and the big bourgeoisie

With the backing of his own and the neighbouring *ejidos* Ruben Jaramillo organised the Agrarian Confederation of Morelos to protect the interests of the peasantry Despite the fierce antagonism of the authorities many of the *ejido* communities joined the Confederation In 1952, on the eve of the state gubernatorial elections the independent peasant organisations formed the Agrarian Party of Morelos On its ticket Ruben Jaramillo ran for governor, winning a majority

But the government sent troops into the state It overrode the will of the electorate and put its own lackey into the governor s chair

Jaramillo suffered a great blow in 1954 when the secret police arrested tortured and put to death his brother Porfirio like him a valiant fighter for the peasants rights Porfirio had led the peasants fight in the state of Hidalgo to expropriate the landowners' estates Not long afterwards friends informed Ruben Jaramillo that the authorities were plotting to smash the independent peasant movement he led and to liquidate him as well There was only one course open to him He collected his followers and withdrew to the mountains Real war began Regular troops were sent against Jaramillo s peasants But the lessons Ruben Jaramillo had learned when fighting under Emiliano Zapata, his beloved mentor, served him in good stead Well versed in the tactics of guerilla warfare, he taught his men to take the government units by surprise, rout them inflict heavy losses, capture their ammunition and slip away as quickly as they came The cooperation of the local population made the guerillas utterly elusive

Epifania, Ruben s wife and true comrade, whom he affectionately called Pifa, fought at her husband s side Tales of her brave deeds still circulate among the people One goes that in a skirmish with a superior enemy unit Ruben

sustained heavy losses and was forced to retreat With a handful of his men and Pifa he took up a position on a hill They held back the enemy until all the men fell in battle and Ruben himself was heavily wounded When Ruben stopped firing the enemy officer and three men—all that remained of their unit—sprang out of ambush hoping to seize the guerilla leader alive With a cool head Pifa let them come close and then brought the four men down with well aimed shots, after which she carried her wounded husband to safety

Lopez Mateos became president of Mexico at the end of 1958 His cabinet may be credited with several progres sive steps in foreign policy Jointly with the governments of Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador, the government of Mexico advanced a proposal to make Latin America an atom free zone Mexico refused to break off diplomatic relations with Cuba Operations of Cuban counter revolutionaries were ban ned on Mexican territory The Mexican representative to the Organisation of American States spoke up for the principle of non interference in the internal affairs of other countries

As to home policy the new president promised democratic changes in political life and respect for the right of the workers and peasants to organise freely Lopez Mateos promised to satisfy the peasants demands for land The president, moreover, expressed a desire to meet Jaramillo He received the peasant leader cordially and even embraced him while admonishing him to stop warring against the re gime, he urged Jaramillo to return to his village, guaranteeing him complete personal inviolability

The Fight for an Independent Peasant Organisation

Jaramillo disbanded his armed squads but did not give up the fight for the peasants' claims The peasants of Morelos and other areas of Mexico continued to regard him as their leader They travelled long distances to visit him at his home in Tlaciltenango They sought his advice and help which he readily gave whenever possible interceding for them with the authorities A reporter of *La Voc de Mexico*, a work ers' paper, came to Tlaciltenango in May 1961 to interview Jaramillo, having to wait all day until he returned home

From the very first comments by the alert, middle aged man sitting across him at the table the journalist recognised a hardened fighter for the people s cause and a man of poli tical acumen

Enthusiastically appraising the victory of the Cuban revolution, the peasant leader told the newspaperman of the meetings of solidarity with Cuba held in Morelos to which thousands of people flocked

'Many came to me offering to enlist if fighters were needed to defend the Cuban revolution against the Americans " Ruben said "Their response was so great because the achieve ments of the Cuban revolution coincide with our own revolu tionary slogan of redistribution of the land The Cuban revolu tion has given the peasants more than we ever got The Cubans have the backing of their government which we have not "

"Will implementation of the agrarian reform suffice to complete the agrarian revolution in Mexico and improve the position of the peasants?" the journalist asked

'No," said Jaramillo emphatically, 'for the simple rea son that an incredible amount of red tape stands in the way of dividing up the latifundia among the peasants What is needed is a radical revision of the agrarian laws in order to facilitate the restitution of land to the peasants and make

certain that they receive arable holdings The agrarian laws must guarantee respect for the interests of the *ejidos* and prohibit interference on political grounds in the affairs of the peasant organisations Loans must be made available without delay to the peasants on favourable terms "

"What course of action do you propose?" asked the news paperman

"The setting up of an independent organisation to defend the peasants claims '

During the interview Jaramillo spoke at great length of the peasants' plight in Morelos adding that it was even worse in many of the other states More than fifty years had elapsed since the widely publicised bourgeois agrarian re form had been launched, yet 80,000,000 hectares of the most fertile lands were still in the hands of 9,600 big landowners, while half as much only 8 mln hectares of it arable was shared by two million *ejido* members, and nearly three mil lion peasants had no land at all

The class struggle in the countryside reached boiling point Peasant disturbances in many areas were so stormy that the government had to bring in troops, tanks and aircraft to quell them Hunger marches to the capital were organised by the rural proletariat The movement for a new peasant organisation unaffiliated to the official National Peasants' Confederation grew by leaps and bounds Ruben Jaramillo who was completely immersed in this movement, busied him self with preparations for a peasant congress to inaugurate the new organisation

His long experience had convinced Jaramillo that isola ted struggle would not free the peasants from exploitation by landowners, caciques, bank officials and racketeers He realised this could be accomplished only if all sections of the toilers united under the leadership of the working class

Jaramillo had first established contact with the Mexican Communist Party in 1952, from then on working in ever closer cooperation with it In 1961, he took the important

step of joining the Communist Party There being no Party branch in the state of Morelos, Ruben Jaramillo set about organising one "In the latter years of his life " *La Voc de Mexico* wrote, 'Jaramillo did not confine himself only to working out concrete forms of struggle for the peasants but tried to impress upon them that only with the establishment of a socialist society could they achieve complete emancipa tion "

Many people in Mexico were aware that the reason why the state of Morelos carried out the agrarian reform more efficiently than other states was because its peasantry was more militant and had a leader like Jaramillo A great many landed estates were divided among the peasants of the state All the same half the peasants of Morelos remained landless Say what the authorities might to the contrary Morelos still had big latifundia though camouflaged under one guise or another In such districts as Michapa El Guarin and Huaxintlan the lands belonging to the latifundists totalled 27 000 hectares Back in 1922 and again in 1929, the govern ment decreed that these estates be handed over to the village *ejidos* But the peasants did not get them They went to a group of influential and unscrupulous politicans and landown ers who with the connivance of the local authorities bribed the village elders into giving them documents stating that these lands had been handed over to the *ejidos* For many years the peasants tried to retrieve the lands which right fully belonged to them, but the caciques would not yield The patience of the peasants at last came to an end In Feb ruary 1961, Jaramillo led a rising of the peasants, and three thousand of them took possession of the farm lands of Micha pa With this deed accomplished Jaramillo went to the capi tal to see the Director of the Agrarian Department (the govern ment office in charge of implementing the agrarian reform) He demanded permission for five thousand landless peasants to set up new *ejidos* in Michapa, El Guarin and Huaxintlan The Department had no formal grounds for a refusal Roberto

Barrios, its director, agreed but with the proviso that the peasants keep within the law and vacate the lands until they were officially handed over to them The peasants complied

The months dragged on, however, and nothing was done At the beginning of 1962, the local authorities still claimed that they had not received instructions from the department to hand over the land to the peasants Tired of waiting, five thousand landless peasants early in 1962, took over the lands illegally requisitioned from them and began building homes for themselves The infuriated caciques and latifundists rushed to their patron, Colonel Avelar, governor of the state By his order the peasants were forcibly driven from the lands and their newly built homes burnt At the same time the landowners spread the false rumour that Jaramillo had "again taken up arms" and obtained a warrant for his arrest The valiant peasant leader was compelled to go into hiding Not wishing to leave his peasant comrades in the lurch he decided to try to see the president and remind him of his unfulfilled promises to the rural population One day when Lopez Mateos was expected in the environs of Mexico City, Ruben and his wife travelled to the capital The president was surrounded by so many police spies that Ruben could not reach his person By sheer luck Epifania managed to hand him a bunch of flowers with a note pinned to them The note contained the peasants' claim

Lead Instead of Land

More months passed and still the local authorities showed no inclination to satisfy the peasants' demands What is more, they reacted with mounting irritation to the peasants' bold resistance under the leadership of Ruben

Ruben Jaramillo could no longer remain in his own home because of the local reactionaries' open threats to kill him On February 13 1962, General Pascual Cornejo Brun, com

mander of the military zone of Morelos, arrived in Michapa with an escort of soldiers and declared that he wished to speak to Jaramillo On being told that Ruben was away the General shouted, "Too bad! We would have made short work of him!'

From time to time Ruben Jaramillo would slip back home to help his wife with the farming On May 23, his presence was reported by a sleuth A few hours later army lorries and jeeps drew up at his gate Ruben, Epifania and their sons were seized by soldiers and police spies and pushed into a car which quickly drove off Their dead bodies were later found on the road Their murder is beyond doubt one of the most heinous crimes in the whole of Mexican history

"The banners of the Communist Party of Mexico are dipped in mourning " wrote the editorial of *La Voc de Mexico* "Another soldier has fallen in the white heat of battle The Communist Party solemnly vows to the Mexican people to fight to the victorious end for the great ideals for which Ruben Jaramillo fought and died "

Although organisations and prominent political and public figures demanded an inquiry into the murder of Jaramillo, not a single party to that "operation" was brought to justice In fact Captain Jose Martinez who commanded the gang of assassins was promoted to a more lucrative post

There were definite reasons disclosed by the democratic press why those who wanted Jaramillo out of the way acted with such haste With the movement for an independent peasant organisation well under way, Jaramillo, an unbending and incorruptible fighter for the people's happiness, was becoming too dangerous a figure His militant stand, on top of the activities of other democratic forces, presented a grave threat to the ruling circles' control of the peasantry through the medium of the National Peasants' Confederation

There were other reasons, too Jaramillo's murder must be laid at the door of those circles in Mexico which had a

material stake in it According to the magazine *Politica* Mexico's Ministry of Water Resources planned to start a large scale irrigation project along the Alto Amacusac and San Jeronimo rivers Its completion would make the lands of El Guarin and Michapa arable and immeasurably raise their value When Roberto Barrios, Director of the Agrarian Department, gave Jaramillo permission to set up *ejidos* in these areas, he knew nothing of the project On learning of it he exclaimed "I had no idea we would be giving these people a veritable gold mine Imagine the political power they'd gain "

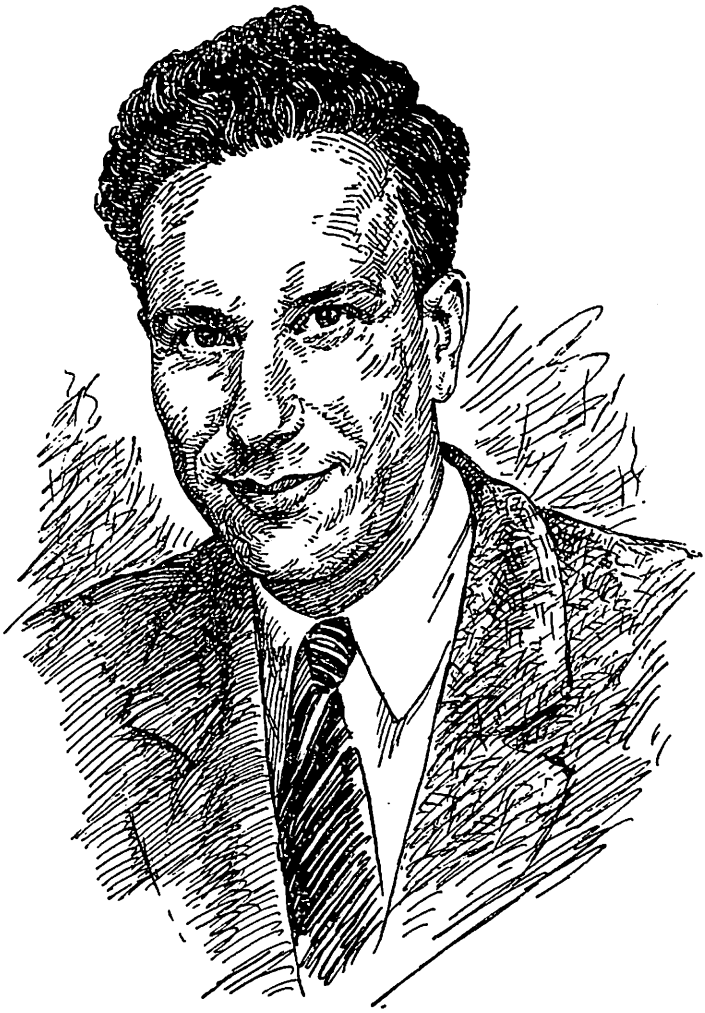
Many greedy hands stretched out for the 400,000,000 pesos these lands would be worth when they became arable An influential personage induced the Ministry of Power Resources to suspend the project "until Jaramillo's case was settled"

The vile assassins perpetrated their bloody deed But those who directed their hand have had little cause to gloat over the results of the murder

The assassination of Jaramillo stirred the great mass of Mexican peasants to a rage which knew no bounds Although troops blocked all the roads leading to Tlacıltenango thousands of peasants came to pay their last respects to their leader whose body lay covered with Zapata's fighting standards "We've had more than we can stand!" cried the peasants of Morelos and other states "We will not allow our rights to be trampled upon and our leaders to be killed!" Jaramillo's slogan "Peasants, organise!" was caught up by the entire Mexican peasantry In less than a year after his death the labour he had begun of founding an independent peasant organisation was consummated

Late in January 1963 the Independent Peasants' Centre with a membership of more than a million was constituted at a congress in Mexico The main objective of this new militant peasants' organisation was to fight for the effective implementation of a radical agrarian reform, for the union of the rural and urban working people, for democracy and peace

In the hall where the peasant congress met Jaramillo s picture was hung beside that of Emiliano Zapata Both these men, Zapata, a semi literate peasant who was able to grasp the historic role of the Russian revolution, and Jaramillo, whose persistent struggle for defence of the interests of the peasants led him into the ranks of the Communist Party, have become symbols of the Mexican peasantry s fight for land, freedom and a bright and happy life



Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah

Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah

bdel Krim Ben Abdallah, a member of the Political Bureau of the Moroccan Communist Party, was treacherously shot in the back on Saturday, March 31, 1956, at 8 30 p m in Casablanca He died in his prime, at the age of thirty three

The son of a prosperous merchant of progressive outlook, Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah was born in 1923 at Tlemcen in Algeria He was named Abdel Krim in honour of the leader of the Riff tribes, a hero in the fight for national independence, who from 1922 to 1926 headed the Riff Republic set up in the north of Morocco after the expulsion of the colonial rulers

Soon after the birth of the boy the family moved to Morocco, settling in Oujda near the Algerian border This town had a proud tradition of armed resistance to foreign invaders No enslaver had ever set foot in Oujda without meeting its population in arms Particularly noted for their valour in the battles against the colonialists were the freedom loving Beni Snassene tribesmen

As a small boy Abdel Krim drank in the stories his elders told of Morocco's fierce fight for national independence

and its heroes After he finished elementary school his parents sent him to the only Lyceum at Oujda a school chiefly for the children of the French settlers Abdel Krim proved to be a pupil of outstanding ability, with an inclination for mathematics When he was in the senior grades he eagerly took part in the political discussions inspired by Morocco's determined resistance to French rule During his childhood and youth he saw the people of his native country oppose colonial domination After the suppression of the Riff Rebellion the fight against the colonialist troops continued The people of Moyen Atlas rose in 1931, Tafilalet in 1932, Djebel Sagho in 1933 Resistance continued in 1934 in the mountains of Anti Atlas and in the extreme south of the country A number of towns including Oujda, were witnesses to the mass killings of Moroccan patriots

In the years that followed an organised political movement developed in Morocco A Committee for National Action the first bourgeois political party was formed in 1934 That same year nationalist demonstrations swept Fez Demonstrations against colonial domination were held in 1937 in Meknes, Marrakesh, Fez and Kenitra Both urban and rural dwellers took part in them Troops fired at the demonstrators killing and wounding scores of people During this period the political consciousness of the population matured rapidly Marxist groups began to function in Casablanca and Rabat Out of these groups in 1943 came the Moroccan Communist Party One of its major slogans was independence for Morocco

A manifesto demanding independence for Morocco was issued in January 1944 by the Istiqlal bourgeois nationalist party The French authorities replied with repressions They arrested the General Secretary and other prominent members of the Istiqlal Party Demonstrations demanding their release broke out in Rabat, Fez and other cities

Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah first took direct part in the national liberation movement in 1944, when college and

school youth came out in support of the manifesto of the Istiqlal Party and protested against the arrest of its leaders Muslim students organised a general strike and street demonstrations One of the organisers of the student demonstrations at Oujda was Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah The French authorities sent troops against the demonstrators Armed skirmishes broke out in a number of cities The demonstrations were dispersed and more than five thousand arrests were made in the course of a few days Many of the prisoners received death or hard labour sentences The French suspended studies till the following year in all the Muslim colleges and had all Moroccans expelled from the lyceums Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah was among those expelled from the Lyceum at Oujda

The Moroccan Communist Party came out in defence of the victims of this terror It denounced the actions of the colonialists and sent a resolute protest to the government

All that was happening made Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah give serious thought to the future course of his life It was clear to him that in the fight for Morocco s freedom knowledge and experience were needed Specialists, too, would be required for the land s administration once independence was gained This strengthened Abdel Krim in his resolve to go on with his education He was finally re admitted to the Lyceum and completed with honours the two year college preparatory course

He went to France in 1946 and matriculated at the Mining Institute of Paris, after making a brilliant showing in the entrance examinations The maturity and depth of his intellect and thirst for knowledge marked out the energetic Abdel Krim among his fellow students

With youthful zest he threw himself into the political activities of North African student groups in Paris which supported the fight for independence waged by their countries He attended meetings and took part in debates on the methods

of struggle and roads of development to be followed by the countries which were casting off the colonial yoke With mounting interest he listened to Communist speakers and applied himself to a study of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin He was attracted by the Communists' courage of conviction broad grasp of events and solid theoretical grounding derived from their study of Marxism-Leninism And so the very logic of the struggle for his people's future led Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah in 1949 to the ranks of the Communist Party, van guard of the working class He linked his study of Marxist theory with the concrete problems confronting the Moroccan people and working class

There were a great many Moroccan students studying in France at the time Many of them upon returning to their native land became staunch fighters for independence Some developed into leaders of the Moroccan national liberation movement Meanwhile they were busy arguing and weighing the merits of the different currents, outlooks, ideas Opinions clashed Some sided with the Marxists, while others support ed bourgeois ideology Abdel Krim stood out among his fellow students for his brilliant gifts as a propagandist and his deep knowledge of Marxism so that in arguing against the bourgeois point of view he invariably got the better of his opponents

His stamina and outstanding organising ability helped him to accomplish much in uniting the groups of young Moroccans studying in France He realised that to win in dependence all the patriotic anti colonialist forces must be welded together Abdel Krim was one of the founders and leaders of the Moroccan Students Union, the first mass orga nisation of the youth

Upon graduating in 1951 with the diploma of a mining engineer Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah lost no time in returning to Morocco and resuming revolutionary work there as a mem ber of the Moroccan Communist Party As a diplomaed min- ing engineer, he received a post at the administration of pits and mines

The Communist Party had entered upon an important phase in its work—overall struggle for the freedom and independence of the land All Party activities now revolved round the fight for independence The Party documents of that period stated "Correct orientation of the national liberation movement largely depends on the role of the working class Hence we must be the foremost champions of its demands, which are closely bound up with the fight for national liberation We must pay very particular attention to the organised struggle of the peasant masses, today as in the past a decisive factor in the nation's fight for freedom We must in effect organise the struggle of all the working people, all the intellectuals and students, defending their demands and linking their efforts with the nationwide movement for independence "

Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah responded to this appeal of the Party by energetically explaining its platform and aims to the people of Rabat He called for the satisfaction of the workers demands, for active participation by all the people in the struggle for independence He did not overlook the students and intellectuals, holding discussions with them in which he outlined the aims of the Communist Party and the fundamentals of Marxism Leninism In August 1951, he headed Morocco's delegation to the World Youth Festival in Berlin Before long he became known as one of the most active Party leaders at Rabat

He was elected to the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the Moroccan Communist Party in May 1952, and made responsible for propaganda among intellectuals and students Much of his time, too, was given to the fight for peace and to exposing the aggressive schemes of the warmongers He was firmly convinced that peaceful coexistence and the fight for peace served the cause of national liberation Even during the Moroccan people's armed risings against colonial rule he continued to fight for world peace, and was one of the leading members of the Moroccan Peace Committee

All of 1952 was a year of mounting opposition by the Moroccan masses to the colonialists In its statement of March 1952 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Morocco stressed that only the strug gle of the people of Morocco plus the broadest alliance of na tional forces and close solidarity with other nations fighting against imperialism can lead the country to independence The entire year was marked by demonstrations of the work ing people and clashes with the colonial troops Terror reigned in the land Thousands of Moroccan patriots were thrown into prison and concentration camps Events were brought to a head in the bloody month of December 1952

On December 7, 1952, the political parties and the trade unions organised a peaceful demonstration in Casablanca in protest against the killing of Ferhat Hached, an eminent Tunisian labour leader They also demanded the abolition of the Protectorate Troops were sent to shoot at the demonstra tors who defended themselves with sticks and stones, soon the streets of Casablanca ran red with the blood of the killed and the wounded On the night of December 7, the police and troops turned their guns on the Central Quarries one of Casablanca s major industrial districts The next day, De cember 8, during the funeral of the victims of this police terror machine gun fire intercepted the procession Appro ximately two thousand Moroccans are estimated to have lost their lives those two days It was the bloodiest massacre Morocco had witnessed since the suppression of the Riff Re bellion in the twenties

One fact of great importance emerges from the December demonstrations the working class had assumed leadership of popular struggle, the most consistent and determined revolu tionary force, the working class had entered the arena

The Communist Party now came out with an exposure of the colonial authorities' responsibility for the brutal reprisals against the Moroccan population It protested resolutely against the continuance of such repressions Aware of the

role the Communist Party was playing in organising mass resistance to colonial bondage the French Resident General issued a decree in December 1952 ordering the dissolution of the Communist Party of Morocco Communist newspapers were confiscated Party branches closed and many of the leaders and active members were killed put into prison or exiled Several months previously, Ali Yata First Secretary of the Communist Party of Morocco had been deported from the country The Party was compelled to go underground

Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah was abroad when all this happened He had left the country in December 1952 to attend the Vienna Peace Congress as a delegate of the Moroccan people He now returned clandestinely to Morocco As a big mining expert, he was offered a highly paid position and guaranteed personal inviolability provided he left the ranks of the Communist Party Ben Abdallah turned down this offer remaining loyal to his convictions and to the Communist Party He did more than refuse a lucrative post, he donated all his savings to the Communist Party leadership Renouncing the privileges of the propertied classes and the life of a man of means, he now took up the existence of a fighter in the trying clandestine conditions in which the Party worked with persecution and peril dogging his every step His wife a loyal helpmate and comrade, now shared with him the hardships of their illegal position

Persecution could not stem the progress of the national liberation movement in Morocco and fierce fighting for independence marked the period of 1953 1955 The Communist Party of Morocco demanded an end to the police terror, immediate termination of the Protectorate, the setting up of a national government, and preparations for elections to the Democratic Assembly

The Moroccan people launched active operations against the colonialists France's colonial policy suffered one setback after another This is well borne out by the fact that between 1953 and 1955 Morocco had no less than five French Resident

Generals The fight for independence crystallised into armed insurrection against the colonialists Clashes between the population and the troops and police began in Casablanca, Rabat Meknes, Oujda and other big cities in the autumn of 1953 In 1954 and 1955, the uprising spread to a number of other districts of Morocco especially the mining areas of Riff and Mid Atlas Using guerilla tactics the patriots swoop ed down unexpectedly on the French troops

All sections of the population flung themselves into the fight for national liberation

Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah set to work organising underground Party branches and a central revolutionary Party nucleus able to carry on activities in the new conditions He helped to found the *El Fikra el-Wataniya* (National Thought), an illegal mimeographed monthly periodical which rallied around it not only the Communist but progressive Moroccan intellectuals as well

In 1953, Communists in Casablanca joined with other patriots to form the Black Crescent, a military organisation which would further the armed struggle for the independence of Morocco "The desire of our people to be the masters of their own destiny is legitimate and historically justified," said the manifesto of the Communist Party "It is clear to all that colonialism has outlived its day and that there is no force which can prevent the colonial and dependent peo ples from gaining their complete freedom "

Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah was the Communist Party s representative in the leading committee of the Black Crescent, soon to become one of the most militant organisations of the liberation movement Its squads were active in Casa blanca, Rabat, Fez and Marrakesh Ben Abdallah had a big part in preparing and carrying out the Black Crescent opera tions The Black Crescent indeed spelled out black fear to the colonialists and their stooges Apart from waging battle for freedom and independence, this organisation, with Ben Ab dallah's participation, conducted a big propaganda campaign

explaining its aims It issued leaflets, appeals and manifestoes driving home to the people the importance of the fight for Morocco's independence and its ultimate aims

It was clear to the colonial rulers that the activities of Morocco's patriotic organisations and, first and foremost, the Communist Party and the Black Crescent, presented a grave threat to French domination in Morocco They set up a police brigade for the express purpose of physically exterminating the leaders of the Communist Party and the Black Crescent Attempts were made to assassinate Abdeslam Bourqia and Hadi Messouak, members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Moroccan Communist Party This police brigade rounded up a car with a group of Black Crescent leaders and firing point blank killed all the persons in it

In the face of ceaseless persecution and danger, Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah continued to work actively underground He travelled back and forth, he went to Oujda, Fez, Marrakesh, Meknes, Tadla and the coal mines of Jerada, he met with the rebels, helping them by word and deed, he carried on propaganda among wavering elements, doing his utmost to win them over to the militant fight for national freedom He also had talks with representatives of the national bourgeoisie His opponents averred that Ben Abdallah got the better of them in an argument as much by his cool headedness and patience as by the force of his logic He helped to draw up a number of Party documents, and wrote articles and leaflets Time and again when the French ruling circles in Morocco came out with promises of reforms, he showed them up for what they were really worth Ben Abdallah stressed that for Moroccans to even consent to discuss such proposed reforms was "a dangerous path likely to encourage the French rulers in their policy of terror and blackmail"

He exposed the repressions carried out by the colonial authorities and urged to fight with redoubled zeal for independence in spite of the fact that some of the leaders of the

national movement had been exterminated The colonialists thought they could completely eradicate the national movement," said a statement issued by the Central Committee of the Moroccan Communist Party They have indeed decimated its cadres but the Party backbone has retained its strength and vigour demonstrating unparalleled initiative, elevating the struggle to heights not known since the Riff epopee combining armed resistance with strikes, demonstrations and boycotts

"Inside our country new leaders are appearing, while our exiled leaders are carrying on effective propaganda in the outside world on behalf of the Moroccan people and their fight for independence '

A huge documented list of proved facts exposing the colonial regime as a regime of bloody terror and oppression was prepared for publication by Ben Abdallah Our aim in publishing this document," he wrote "is to disclose to the world instances of the brutality of the police regime in our country, which is getting worse all the time How many savage acts and incredible atrocities are committed every day by the colonial 'civilisers'! What sufferings our people must endure! And yet they have kept their faith in the triumph of their noble cause! '

Ben Abdallah dedicated himself wholly to the struggle for the freedom and independence of his people At the same time he continued his determined fight for world peace A letter from the C C , C P M , to the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the USSR, USA, Britain and France ran as follows 'Aware of our responsibility and place in mankind's fight for peace, our people will welcome every step taken in that direction Our land, together with all the countries of the globe gives its ardent support to the just proposals of the Soviet Union for a peaceful settlement of such controversial issues as the German problem the question of disarmament and prohibition of the atomic weapon "

A resolute stand was taken by Ben Abdallah against the

Paris agreements ratified in 1955 by the French government under pressure from London and Washington A communique from the C C , C P M , also drawn up by Ben Abdallah and dated March 30 1955, said 'This is an extremely dangerous step directed against peace and against Morocco Our country, particularly threatened by atomic destruction in the event of a world conflict cannot remain indifferent to the growing danger of war The ratification of the Paris Agreements is certain to have grave consequences for all spheres of life According to the terms of these agreements, it (the French government —*Author*) is empowered to offer nazi and Italian trusts a share in exploiting our country s natural resources Just as the French government is now trying to make use of the Atlantic Pact to promote its policy of colonial oppression, it will try to make use of the organisation set up as a result of the Paris Agreements to give it diplomatic backing, arms and troops for the suppression of the national liberation movement in North Africa and other countries

The Communist Party of Morocco attached great import ance to united action by the wide masses of people It spared no effort to organise a united anti imperialist front of all the patriotic forces of the nation If it failed in this the reason lies in the inconsistency and wavering of the major political parties which reflected the interests of the national bour geoisie All the same, the Communist Party s energetic work in rallying the masses yielded good results and the most varied sections of the population took an active part in the anti colonialist and anti imperialist actions of that period

Ever greater numbers of people were drawn into the strug gle, which reached an especially high pitch in 1955 In Au gust of that year, street fighting broke out in Rabat and the people built barricades There were clashes, too, in other cities, including Khouribga, Kenitra, Safi and Magadora, and in the Central Quarries, a workers' district of Casablanca, as well as its Derb Loumay Cherif quarter Throughout the land the people were rising in rebellion Under the circum

stances, the French government had no choice but to hold talks with delegates of various Moroccan political parties (excepting the Communists) The talks took place in Aix les Bains Shortly afterwards, Sultan Mohammed Ben Yussuf, who was deposed by the French in August 1953 for demanding independence for Morocco was allowed to return In December 1955, the first cabinet of a national government was formed in Morocco

That same month a delegation from the Moroccan Communist Party into which Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah entered was given an audience by Sultan Mohammed Ben Yussuf The communist delegation tried to impress it upon the Sultan that the colonial and feudal order which was crumbling beneath the blows of the Moroccan people must be replaced by a democratic regime In view of the continuing reprisals against freedom fighters, the delegation earnestly requested the Sultan to make the French government agree to cease hostilities against armed groups in the Riff mountains, stop persecuting resistants, and release patriots sentenced to death or imprisonment The need for improving the social and economic position of the working people was also underlined by the delegation That could hardly be accomplished, it said, without solving the problems of wages and distribution of the land among the peasants

The necessity of alleviating the lot of the workers and peasants was stressed with even greater urgency by the Communist Party delegation which called on the Moroccan Minister of Labour and Public Affairs in January 1956 The delegation was headed by Ben Abdallah

It drew the Minister's attention to the appalling conditions of the Moroccan working people and the miserable wages they received Ben Abdallah, spokesman for the delegation said that the workers and peasants who were playing a decisive role in the struggle for Morocco s freedom, had the right to a decent living standard and fully deserved the concern and solicitude of the government With figures to support his

arguments he pointed out that the industrialists, mine own ers and colonial settlers of Morocco had amassed enough wealth to pay their workers a living wage The delegation point ed out that by taking a firm stand against the employers the government of Morocco could foil the plans of those who were out to perpetuate the regime of the Protectorate

Busy as he was, torn by his manifold duties Abdel Krim found time to continue his study of the classics of Marxism Leninism and advance his political education He particu larly interested himself in problems of economics In his frequent talks before audiences of intellectuals and students he explained the mechanism of capitalism s subjugation of the working class The book to which he turned most often for guidance was Lenin s *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*

Life in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries interested Abdel Krim greatly Speaking at Marxist circles and with workers and peasants, he often pointed out what an important factor the world socialist system was in promot ing the victory of the national liberation movement Time and again he reiterated 'Our struggle for independence is not an isolated struggle " He indicated that this struggle was getting ever greater backing from the socialist countries, the states which had recently won their sovereignty and embarked on the road of independent development, in fact from all progressive mankind

He linked up the struggle for independence with the eradication of foreign bases on Moroccan territory and the withdrawal of the French, American and Spanish troops He pointed up the importance of combating feudalism and the reactionary forces

The long fight for Morocco s independence was won in 1956 In February 1956, the French government agreed to negotiate with the government of Morocco and define the status of the country On March 2, 1956, France recognised the independence of Morocco After forty four years of French

colonial domination Morocco regained her political sovereign ty

However the colonialists and their stooges refused to con sider themselves defeated and did all they could to keep the co untry in what was actually a state of colonial bondage They did not even stop at the physical extermination of some of the most active leaders of the national liberation movement

One of the victims of their terror was Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah He was shot after returning from Meknes where he had gone to speak to the peasants on the agrarian platform of the Communist Party and just before he was due at Stock holm to attend a meeting of the World Peace Council Ben Abdallah lived to see the day of Morocco s independence, but his life was cut short in less than a month after that day It was a life given to the last for the good of his country and his people and for peace in the world

An outcry of anguish and indignation from the democratic public of Morocco met the news of Ben Abdallah s murder This crime like the assassination of other Moroccan patriots was part of the plot to deprive Morocco of its most indomit able defenders and hinder the advance of the young state Even the reactionary press paid tribute to Ben Abdallah as a man who was intelligent steadfast in his views and forward looking"

Protests against the treacherous assassination of Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah came pouring in from patriotic organi sations in Morocco and from progressives in other lands The Moroccan students organisation in Paris student sympathisers of the Moroccan Communist Party and the Istiqlal Party, the Paris branch of the Moroccan Students' Association, as well as the youth affiliated with the Democratic Party for Independence (P D I), appealed to the Sultan of Morocco for an investigation of the crime and severe punishment for its perpetrators

Ali Yata, the First Secretary of the Moroccan Communist Party, sent a wire to the chairman of Morocco's Council of

Ministers in which he underlined that the villainous assassination of a prominent leader of the Communist Party of Morocco was apparently part of a "scheme to intimidate staunch patriots, promote anarchy and obstruct the complete victory of the national independence of Morocco"

In its statement on the murder of Ben Abdallah the Central Committee of the Communist Party said "The Communist Party of Morocco sorrowfully bows its head before the radiant memory of Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah, a great patriot who fell on the field of battle ' The Communist Party urged all patriots to strengthen their vigilance and solidarity and prevent the band of hired assassins from inflicting further harm on the interests of their native land to focus all their efforts on the building of a new, free and flourishing Morocco

On April 3, the whole nation mourned with the inhabitants of Casablanca where the funeral of Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah was held

Delegates from all of Morocco's patriotic organisations arrived in Casablanca to pay their last respects to the man who had laid down his life for the country Communists marched in the funeral procession shoulder to shoulder with members of the Istiqlal Party, the Democratic Party for Independence and other patriotic organisations

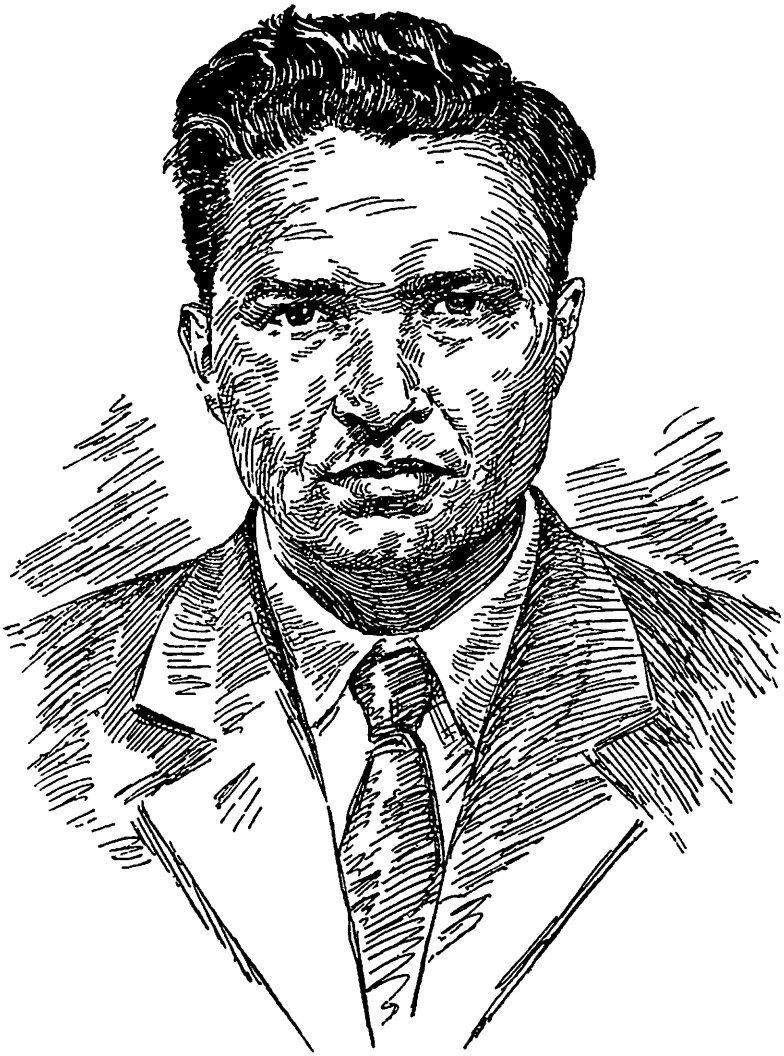
The funeral was also attended by delegations of Algerian patriots then fighting against the French colonialists by peasants from Meknes whom Abdel Krim had addressed just before his death, and mining engineers with whom he had worked On the day of the funeral all shops were closed in Casablanca

Police cordons were mounted by the French to stop the procession, but it proved too formidable for them to dare interfere

In a special statement on the assassination of Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah and other Moroccan patriots, the Political Bureau of the Moroccan Communist Party said "A large gang of conspirators, generously supplied with arms and funds,

is using terror to impose its laws on all Resistance organisations and political parties, and through them on the government We need hardly say that such a conspiracy plays directly or indirectly into the hands of imperialists of every brand who want nothing better than to furnish proof of Morocco s inability to administer her own affairs and at the same time undermine our young state so that they can bring her under their thumb again " The Political Bureau called for a united national front of all popular forces to put the marauders in their places

That gang of adventurists and their instigators did not have it in their power to turn back the wheel of history Ever new victories are being scored by the nations which are fighting for their independence and liberty The names of those who sacrificed their lives for freedom and a better future for the working people will live forever Nor will the memory of Comrade Abdel Krim Ben Abdallah ever fade



Wilfrido Alvarez

Wilfrido Alvarez

The inhabitants of a suburb in Asuncion, capital of Paraguay, were awakened at dawn on June 8, 1963, by shots and grenade bursts A hot scuffle was fought on the grounds of a small house in Guarani Street concealed behind dense foli age

Someone saw police cars pull up near the house and men get out of them After the shooting subsided the police combed the neighbourhood and then drove off followed by two ambu lance cars

It was some time before the actual happenings of that night in Guarani Street were made known The newspapers merely carried a notice on the funeral of Mustafa Abdala a police officer notorious for his cruelty to political prisoners It was said that Abdala had been "killed by persons un known"

Fearing popular wrath, the government of Stroessner, flunkey of the American monopolies, hesitated to make pub lic its 'victory" and concealed the fact that Wilfrido Alvarez, leader of the Paraguayan Communist Party, member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, had met his death that

night in the house concealed behind the dense foliage Only several days later did the people learn of this grievous fact from leaflets posted on the house walls by the Communist Party

Under the Yoke of Tyranny

The tragedy enacted in Asuncion on that June night of 1963 is but one of many such tragedies resulting from the savage fascist terror which has raged for many years in Paraguay

The Guarani as the people of Paraguay are called after the native Indian population whose language they have adopted are robbed, exploited and oppressed by the American monopolies as few peoples are They are at the same time one of the most valiant and heroic people alive in the world today A love of liberty burns like a bright flame in the breasts of this people whose whole history is an example of remarkable fortitude and valour in the struggle against their oppressors Let us recall a few highlights of Paraguayan history After the declaration of political independence in 1811 the republic of Paraguay, unlike its neighbours, pursued a free and independent domestic and foreign policy The policy bore fruit, and Paraguay became economically and culturally one of the most advanced Latin American states, its population enjoying higher living standards than its neighbours The reactionary governments of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay began to regard it as a 'bad example" In 1865, they provoked war against Paraguay, finally depriving the country of her independence and seizing a large part of her territory But this was achieved only after five years of desperate fighting in which nearly ninety per cent of Paraguay s male population was killed or crippled In one of the final decisive encounters, known as the Battle of Sierra Cora, every single man and officer of two joint Paraguayan forces fell on the field

of battle, including Francisco Solano Lopez, the president of the republic, who had personal command of the troops These brave men stood to the death, keeping alive the glorious traditions of Paraguay's past

To grasp the sad plight of the Paraguayan people in our own day one need but recall the fact that every sphere of their life, economic, political or cultural, is under foreign domination, chiefly that of North American companies There are all kinds of United States missions and agencies operating within the country Paraguay's puppet government obediently takes its orders from Washington Long years of plunder of the country's natural resources have reduced most of its population to a state of utter penury The people of Paraguay are literally dying out and starvation is the cause To survive, great numbers have emigrated from the land For more than fifteen years now the size of the population has remained practically the same, the estimate figure being 1,800,000 On the other hand there are from 500,000 to 600,000 Paraguayans residing in the neighbouring countries Hence, almost a quarter of the inhabitants of Paraguay have been compelled to abandon their native soil, a figure appalling in itself

Loyal to the memory of their freedom loving forebears, the people of Paraguay have gone on doggedly fighting for their deliverance from oppression At the end of the Second World War the revolutionary movement in Paraguay gained new vigour from the victories scored by the Soviet army against the Hitlerite invaders Civil war raged in the land for four months It ended in the ruthless suppression of the democratic forces However, new uprisings kept flaring up in the years that followed and a guerilla movement swept the country between 1959 and 1961 The valiant struggle of this small poverty stricken nation has shaken the foundations of the dictatorship regime but has not yet brought the people deliverance The regime which dictator Stroessner and his underling Egdar Insfrano, Minister of the Interior, have

established in Paraguay is comparable only with that of Franco and Salazar

Legal status in Paraguay is enjoyed only by a faction of the so called Colorado Party supporting the government, and led by the big landowners and bourgeoisie working hand in glove with United States imperialists All other political parties, the bourgeois parties (Liberi and Februarist) let alone the Communist Party, operate clandestinely The newspapers of Paraguay print well sifted items supplied by United States press agencies, society news, reports of the conferences and rallies of the Colorado Party faction and of church services as well as long pages of advertisements

Paraguay is heavily cordoned by police and army posts The barbed wire enclosures of concentration camps and barracks dot the desert area of Chaco and other unhealthy localities remote from the capital, the dismal walls of prisons complete the picture For sixteen years now Paraguay has been under martial law Only by day do its towns and villages show signs of life At dusk the streets are deserted, and the inhabitants forbidden to leave their homes This is when the police begin to run amock Homes are raided and sacked People are hurled into jail and often killed without interrogation or trial Thousands of patriots who fought for the liberty of their country and their long suffering people have been languishing in prison for years And who can say how many loyal fighters have died of torture or been exterminated in the wards of prison hospitals? After long and brutal maltreatment groups of prisoners, especially women, are often driven to the border and forcibly deported to the neighbouring states A new method of dealing with guerilla fighters is dropping them in sacks from flying planes or out of boats into the murky waters of the Parana and in this way covering up all traces of their murder

Nothing, however, can damp the fighting spirit of the people of Paraguay From sporadic outbursts the workers and peasants have gone over to strong organised resistance Credit

for this is due to the noble sons of the people, the Communists, to men like Comrade Wilfrido Alvarez who was brutally murdered on June 8, 1963

The Pages of an Inspiring Life

Little is known about the life and activities of this communist underground worker, this noble fearless and unselfish fighter No biography of Wilfrido Alvarez has yet been written It has been possible, however, to establish certain facts about his life by talking to his comrades

Comrade K , a Paraguayan Communist Party member, undergoing treatment in a cheerful Moscow hospital ward, found it painful to talk about his dead comrade He could hardly believe that Wilfrido was no longer among the living and that he must speak of him as "was" Here is what Comrade K had to say about Wilfrido

Wilfrido Alvarez was born in 1924 of poor parentage and from his childhood knew want and privation His great ambition was to acquire an education but despite all his efforts he got no further than the humble profession of a bookkeeper which as a matter of fact he never practised A deep abhorrence of the existing regime in Paraguay led him at the age of twenty to adopt what he considered to be the only true course for him, and devote his life to the fight for the happiness of his people

And before he knew it he was completely immersed in revolutionary activities Having good propaganda and organising ability he became leader of Asuncion's progressive youth In 1945, Wilfrido was brought into close contact with the communist student Youth Federation of Paraguay and saw that his own place was in the ranks of the Young Communists A year later he was elected to the Central Committee of the Federation Wilfrido was active in the civil war of 1947 When the people's armed forces in whose ranks were many Communist Party members, moved on the capital held by

dictator Morinigo's troops, Wilfrido mobilised the youth in the enemy's rear to come to the assistance of the democratic army

At the height of the civil war Wilfrido Alvarez was jailed Like many other revolutionaries, he used his time in prison to improve his educational background and study Marxist Leninist theory Also he taught his cell mates to read and write They were workers and peasants who like him self had fought in the civil war Wilfrido did his best to make them understand the fundamentals of Marxism Leninism He was elected by proxy to the post of secretary of the Com munist Youth Federation and shortly afterwards he joined the Communist Party of Paraguay The 2nd Congress of the Paraguayan Communist Party, held in 1949 elected this well tried fighter to its Central Committee In 1953, a plena ry meeting of the Central Committee voted him candidate member to the Political Committee of the C C and later member of that Committee in 1957 Comrade Alvarez became a member of the C C Secretariat

At the time of preparation for the massive strike of Au gust September 1958, Comrade Antonio Maidano, a noble son of the Paraguayan people, was arrested And for many years now subjected to cruel torture and indignaties, he has been languishing in prison After the arrest of Antonio Mai dano the Party charged Wilfrido Alvarez with responsibility for Party work inside the country, a task of which he acquit ted himself with honour during the guerilla warfare period of 1960 1961

Wilfrido Alvarez was an ardent propagandist of Marx ism Leninism, stoutly defending the purity of these teachings in his speeches and writings His fervent faith in the commun ist cause, integrity and fellow feeling for the ordinary man won him many followers People were drawn to him because they saw in him a sincere friend and comrade Under Wil frido's guidance many young Party members matured to leadership Today they are in charge of key sectors of

Party work and by their propaganda are recruiting more and more workers, peasants and students for the strug gle

During the years of his underground Party work Wilfri do Alvarez travelled abroad twice He came to the Soviet Union for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Octo ber Revolution and what he saw in the land of socialism inspi red him tremendously Simultaneously, in 1957, he attended the Moscow Conference of Representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties With great warmth and affection Wilfrido reported to his comrades on his trip to the Soviet Union, tel ling them of the great headway that had been made by the land which was building communism Wilfrido Alvarez was a true friend of the Soviet people

In the Party Wilfrido was assigned to important work requiring great presence of mind and pluck Invariably he justified the Party's trust The experience he gained in working with wide sections of workers, peasants and intellec tuals stood him in good stead when he helped to frame pro gramme documents of the Central Committee of the Para guayan Communist Party

Comrade K , his friend, also spoke of the relatives of this prominent Paraguayan revolutionary—his wife a staunch Communist, whom he affectionately called Ñoño his brother Francisco, hero and disabled veteran of the civil war of 1947, and his sisters and aged parents whom Wilfrido loved dearly

On the sad night of his death Comrade Wilfrido arrived at the appointed place to hold a secret meeting with his comrades In the sixteen years of Wilfrido's underground Party work there had been many such meetings This particu lar one had been called to discuss vital questions of their difficult struggle for freedom and its further development The meeting was almost over when the comrade on watch gave warning of danger Wilfrido glanced out of the window and saw a police squad with pointed rifles approach the house

A prompt decision was taken not to surrender and destroy all papers which in the possession of the secret police might harm the Party

The moment the police opened fire Wilfrido ordered his comrades to defend themselves Preferring to die rather than be taken by the mad brutes that came at them, the handful of valiant Communists stood their ground Gloating, the frenzied police broke into the house led by their chief Abdala Anticipating Abdala's shot by the fraction of a second, Wilfrido fired, shooting the police chief dead on the spot Firing in confusion, the police beat a hasty retreat, taking with them the dead body of their chief During the scuffle Wilfrido had been badly wounded in the leg In a flash he made up his mind to save his comrades by covering up their retreat with his own body There was a secret passage and he ordered them to use it for a quick getaway He could not move, but would not permit a moment's delay on his own account There was no time for farewells Obeying orders, his comrades were leaving the field In a half hour's time two more police squads arrived, one commanded by Baez Raimundi, notorious killer and hangman, the other dispatched by Police Station No 7 of Asuncion There followed the unequal contest of a bleeding hero against a whole gang of police As long as he could, Wilfrido held the enemy at bay The precious moments needed for his comrades to make their escape were gained Wilfrido was happy now in the thought that they were out of danger, that they would go on battling for the cause for which he was giving his life

In a faltering hand he wrote on the wall with his own blood 'Viva el comunismo! Viva la revolucion democratica! Abajo la dictadura!" (Long Live Communism! Long live the Democratic Revolution! Down with the Dictatorship!)

Wilfrido from loss of blood dropped unconscious Like a pack of frenzied hounds they rushed at him and literally cut him up with their knives

* * *

It is painful to speak of a comrade's death Comrade K concluded his brief account by showing the obituary in which the Paraguayan Communist Party paid tribute to the radiant memory of Wilfrido Alverez 'The heroism, fortitude, integri ty and iron resolve of Comrade Alvarez," said the obituary, "are an example to democrats, patriots and the entire Para guayan people in its indomitable struggle against the Stroess ner dictatorship of assassins and traitors of the coun try "

This vile murder of an ardent patriot evoked an outcry of indignation in Paraguay and in the whole world The Uru guayan periodical *El Popular*, the Argentine *Nuestra Pa labra* and many other publications branded the killers sent by the Stroessner and Insfran clique as dastardly agents of imperialism

To cover up their craven deed the Paraguayan police spread the rumour that Wilfrido had committed suicide The Pa raguayan Communist Party exposed this falsehood in its obituary "He died the death of a Communist fighting against the enemy to his last breath," this document stated

The murder of Wilfrido Alvarez is part of a plan by Stro essner and his henchmen to completely wipe out the Para guayan Communists and all other democrats of the land Late in June 1963, Carlos Rivas one of the leaders of the Com munist Youth Federation of Paraguay, was shot down by police agents in broad daylight in a busy street of Asun cion

In mortal danger, too, are the lives of such outstanding figures of Paraguay's liberation movement as Antonio Maida no, Ananias Maidano, Julio Rojas and many others who for long years now have been rotting in the dungeons of the land Indeed, all Paraguayans who dare protest against lawless ness and oppression imperil their lives Atrocities of the worst kind are committed against those whose sole guilt is their

yearning for freedom And yet the struggle for freedom goes on with unabating momentum The people of Paraguay know that they do not stand alone They have on their side the sympathy and support of all men of good will in the world The long suffering Guarani nation will not lay down arms It will heed the calls which Wilfrido Alvarez, noble son of the Guarani people, inscribed in his blood in the last hour of the exemplary life

Mariano Balgos

Mariano Balgos

The prominent Philippine Communist leader Mariano Balgos was born in 1898 of working class parents His father fought in the national liberation revolution of 1896 which put an end to Spanish oppression, and from 1898 to 1901 against the invading American armies

From his childhood a burning hatred for the enslavers of his country flamed in Mariano's breast, he carried that feeling undiminished through long years of grim struggle for the people s happiness

At the age of seventeen, Mariano finished school and went to work at the printing plant of *The Manila Daily Bulletin* Standing at the type case all day he was brought into close touch with the working man whose thoughts and aspirations he was soon able to read and understand His observations found an outlet in poetry and tales, and before long he gained recognition as a poet He was only nineteen when he was elected secretary of the Society of Literature and Art That was in 1917 and he held that honourable post until 1924 This proletarian poet made a notable contribution to the development of Tagalog literature

His literary career cannot be separated from his role in the working class movement, for he used his talent to

inspire the Philippine people in their struggle for a better lot In 1917, Balgos joined the Printers Union, one of the most militant unions of the time He was elected secretary of his local in 1918, and in 1924 became the National Secretary of the Printers Union

The twenties to Balgos were years of groping for his people s right path to freedom, independence and happiness His first steps as a revolutionary were heavily encumbered by petty bourgeois nationalist ideas In 1924, he was elected secretary of the Mabini Brotherhood, a semi legal nationalist organisation, and in 1927 participated in the work of Sons of the Country, a secret society He was also involved in the religious movement He joined the Philippine independent Church movement in 1924, and in 1926 appeared as a preacher for the Risal Church, a nationalist sect which canonised Jose Risal, the eminent Philippine writer and scholar who was shot by the Spanish colonial rulers

Balgos friendship with Crisanto Evangelista, chairman of the Printers Union and one of the first propagandists of scientific socialism in the Philippines, helped to further shape his world outlook and rid him of petty bourgeois illusions Convinced of the futility of anarchist plots and religious seekings, he broke with the religious movement in 1928 and two years later left the Mabini Brotherhood

Day to day struggle for the workers' rights and close intercourse with the leaders of the Workers Party made Balgos a real revolutionary In 1929, he became one of the leaders of the Union of Proletarians, a progressive trade union centre sponsored by the Workers Party He worked on as a linotype operator and make up man until 1931, while acting as secretary of the Printers Union

In 1930 Balgos joined the newly organised Communist Party of the Philippines From then on his life was inseverably linked with the communist movement He was elected to the Political Bureau of the Philippine Communist Party in 1933

Repeated arrests stalked his footsteps from 1931 to 1933 In between the arrests he organised and himself frequently addressed demonstrations and workers meetings

Along with sixteen other leaders of the Philippine communist and working class movement Balgos was framed by the American imperialists, tried and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment and exile While in exile in the province of Tarlac, he continued his militant work under the very nose of the police, setting up a branch of the Proletarian Union, an illegal Youth League, a Women's League and even organising a school for the political training of the young leaders of these organisations

After being amnestied at the end of 1937, he returned to Manila where he again devoted himself to the trade union movement

In 1940 and 1941, as one of the leaders of the Communist Party, he threw himself into the organisation of the Popular Front In 1941, he stood for election to the Senate on a Popular Front ticket

The Japanese invasion of the Philippines in December 1941 and flight of the American colonialists confronted the Communist Party with the challenge of organising popular resistance to the enemy

The Central Committee of the C P P sent Balgos to the province of Rizal There, in the mountains of eastern part of Rizal, he set up a guerilla base His armed unit engaged in reconnoitring, getting provisions and maintaining liaison with other guerilla groups When this unit was tracked down by the Japanese military police, Balgos had to flee from Rizal

Meanwhile the Communist Party initiated a national anti Japanese front of trade unions, workers', peasants' and students' organisations Early in 1942, the Hukbalahap, a people's army uniting most of the scattered guerilla detachments, was founded under Communist Party leadership to fight the Japanese

Balgos served in the Hukbalahap in 1942, displaying great courage and valour in many of its operations He was nicknamed "Bakal" (the "Iron One") by the fighting men to whose training and political education he devoted much effort He also carried on propaganda among the civilian popu lation, and lectured at a school for the Hukbalahap command ing staff opened in the Candaba district on territory libera ted by the guerillas

Appointed political head of the Hukbalahap by the Cent ral Committee of the C P P in 1944, Balgos now spent all his time among its fighting men and commanders, inspiring them by word and personal example

Early in 1945 American troops landed on the Philippine Islands The Hukbalahap distinguished itself in the battles for the liberation of the country The American imperialists who dreaded the Philippine masses more than the Japanese invaders took fright At the end of February 1945 General McArthur's Counter Intelligence tried to decapitate the gue rilla army by arresting the leaders of the Hukbalahap staff

At this crucial juncture in Philippine history, the Com munist Party appointed Mariano Balgos Commander in Chief of the Hukbalahap He coped eminently with the respon sible task of changing the disposition of the guerilla detach ments in Central Luzon in order to avert a blow in the back by the American army

Following the liberation of Manila, the Communist Party sent Balgos to the Philippine capital to assume leadership of the working class movement Balgos applied his organisa tional gifts and experience to the foundation of a new trade union centre—the Congress of Labour Organisations

After the liberation of the Philippines from the Japan ese, the Communist Party adopted the course of steering the country towards revolution by peaceful means In July 1945 a Democratic Alliance was set up It consisted of the Com munist Party, the Hukbalahap, the National Peasants Union, the Congress of Labour Organisatons as well as a

number of progressive bourgeois organisations The Democratic Alliance began a crusade for complete independence, the implementation of agrarian reforms and observance of the Bill of Rights Balgos represented the Congress of Workers Organisations in the Executive Committee of the Democratic Alliance

Under the pressure of the masses the American imperialists had to grant independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946 But the Roxas government which now came into power with the blessings of the United States pledged to smash the revolutionary forces of the people The reactionaries directed their main blow against the Communist Party and its militant force the Hukbalahap In 1946 and 1947 government troops and police engaged in widespread punitive operations on Luzon Island in areas where the peasant movement was especially powerful

Mariano Balgos, acting as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Philippines from May 1948 bent every effort towards a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict In July 1948 the Communist Party succeeded in reaching a cease fire agreement with the government on condition of an amnesty and implementation of social reforms However, the government did not keep its part of the bargain, and in August 1948 hostilities between the government troops and guerilla detachments were resumed

The Communist Party raised the slogan of struggle for the overthrow of the reactionary government, for complete independence and full democracy

In October 1948, the Communist Party was outlawed The following year in the face of great odds Mariano Balgos engaged in legal work as vice chairman of the Congress of Workers Organisations

Seeking to undermine communist influence in the working class movement, the reactionaries began whipping up anti communist hysteria A committee for the investigation of "anti Philippine" activities was set up It was the Communist

Party, vanguard of the working class of the country that the committee chose as its first victim

It began its witchhunt in December 1948 with a summons on Mariano Balgos He appeared before the Philippine Mc Arthyites with a statement for the press in his pocket In it he fearlessly exposed the anti popular nature of the policy pursued by the Philippine ruling clique He declared that he would reply to the questions of the committee members on one condition—that he be allowed to make his statement pub lic

In a word Mariano Balgos made the most of this oppor tunity to enunciate publicly the political line of the Com munist Party and to propagate Marxist ideas He stressed the fact that the Communist Party was against imperialist and feudal exploitation and that its goals were complete in dependence advancement of the national economy and im plementation of agrarian reforms

Balgos declared point blank that the Philippine Commun ists would oppose any war venture of the government against the Soviet Union "We shall support the Soviet Union because we consider Russia the leader of world democracy and the fighter for peace as well as champion of the interests of the common people the world over It is preposterous to think ' Balgos said, that Russia is ever likely to take the initiative in starting a war

In this atmosphere of rabid persecution of the Commun ist Party it became increasingly difficult for Balgos to carry on propaganda work legally Finally in December 1949 with arrest and conviction threatening him he left Manila for the battle area of the people s guerilla army, Liberation Army, as it came to be known after 1950

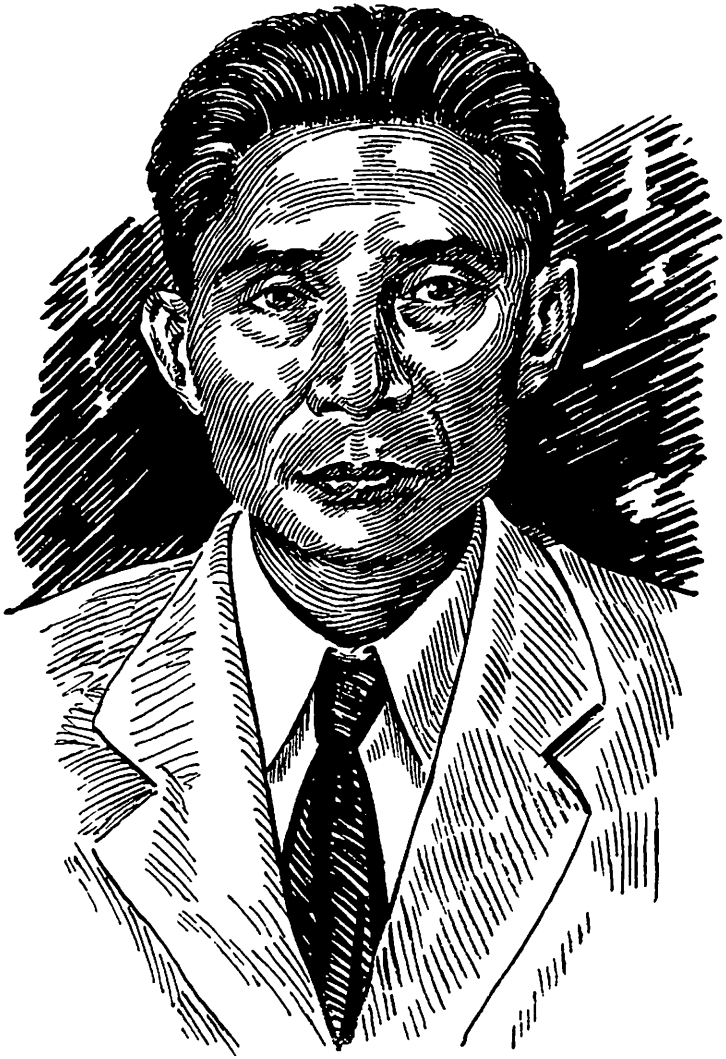
The underground Central Committee assigned Balgos to the command of a large guerilla force in the south eastern part of Luzon Island His organisational and military gifts were displayed here to the best advantage Moved by implicit faith in their ' iron ' commander, as Balgos was called, the

population of Luzon joined the fight for the freedom of their country en masse

In 1950 the Liberation Army scored a number of major victories It was not until 1954 that this people s army, hard pressed by government troops equipped with modern American weapons was compelled to disperse and retreat to the hills and forests

The greatly outnumbered guerillas sustained heavy losses Many leaders of the Communist Party, among them Guillermo Capadocia its former General Secretary, died the death of the brave

Their gallant commander "Bakal", fought to the last in the ranks of the guerillas On November 18 1954, he fell in battle The name of Mariano Balgos valiant patriot and dearly loved leader of the Manila workers is inscribed forever in the history of the national liberation movement of the Philippine people



Crisanto Evangelista

Crisanto Evangelista

Crisanto Evangelista founder of the Philippine Communist Party was born in 1888 of peasant stock and from his early years knew the bitter lot of the poor and exploited in a downtrodden colonial country

A Manila printer by trade, young Evangelista became active in the Philippine labour movement joined and later became general secretary of the Printers Union which soon developed into a militant trade union under his leader ship

Evangelista entered politics as a member of the bour geois reformist Nationalist Party which controlled the Work ers Congress the first trade union amalgamation in the Phi lippines founded in 1913 He gained prominence and in 1919 was elected to the Executive Committee of the Workers Congress

At that time the trade union movement in the Philippines was decidedly under the sway of its reformist leadership The latter, instead of urging the workers to battle for their class interests, preached religious morality and 'the unity of labour and capital" Although the Printers Union stood out in the Workers Congress for its militancy, its leader Evan

gelista still laboured under the influence of the Nationalist Party with its false hopes of the Philippines winning their independence through negotiations with US authorities In 1919 Evangelista was a member of an 'independence mission' which went to Washington on behalf of the Philippine Legislative Assembly and pleaded with the United States Congress to grant independence to the Philippines His visit to the United States convinced him that the idea of an independent Philippine state was deeply abhorrent to American Congressmen He realised how futile it was to even hope that the American imperialists would of their own accord renounce domination of the Philippines

During his stay in the United States Evangelista came in contact with American trade union leaders They helped him to get a better grasp of Marxism and told him more about the great victory of the Russian proletariat which had overthrown its autocratic rulers and made a socialist revolution

Evangelista returned to his country full of new ideas about the struggle of his people for a better life and the independence of their native land

In 1920, he led one of the first political strikes in the history of the Philippine labour movement when the Printers Union came out in protest against the publication in Manila newspapers of articles offensive to the national dignity of the Philippine people

No longer able to reconcile himself to the reformist policy of the Nationalist Party Evangelista broke with that party In 1924 together with like minded persons, he organised the Workers Party

The new party headed by Antonio Ora representing the progressive Philippine intelligentsia, Juan Feleo, village teacher and peasant leader, and Evangelista came out with a platform of immediate and complete independence for the Philippines the setting up of a people's government purchase by the government of large land holdings and their subsequent sale at reasonable rates to tenant farmers and

agricultural workers and instruction in the native language

Despite organisational weaknesses, the Workers Party played an important role in the working class movement and its leaders helped to spread the ideas of scientific socialism among the proletariat At its 2nd Congress in February 1925 the Workers Party resolved to nominate candidates for elec tion to the Legislative Assembly

Soon after the Workers Party was founded Evangelista as Secretary of the Central Committee, began a long and bitter struggle against the reformist leadership of the Work ers Congress He succeeded in winning a considerable portion of the trade union membership over to the ideas of the Work ers Party In 1926, he was elected secretary of the Workers Congress and later its vice president

In June 1927, Evangelista and his comrades scored a ma jor victory the Workers Congress was affiliated with the Pan Pacific Secretariat of Trade Unions the revolutionary trade union centre of the Far Eastern countries

In March 1928 Evangelista headed a Philippine trade union delegation to the 4th Profintern Congress in the Soviet Union His speech there acquainted representatives of the world trade union movement with the life and struggle of the Philippine proletariat The Congress elected Evangelista a member of the Central Council of the Profintern

Closer contacts with the international working class mo vement promoted the political education of the Philippine proletariat and enabled the Philippine trade unions to profit by the organisational and tactical experience of the more ma ture working class organisations of other lands Under the leadership of the Workers Party the trade unions were reor ganised along industrial lines

Evangelista did his utmost to strengthen the unity of the Philippine working class Thanks to the efforts of the Workers Party the membership of the Workers Congress in creased in 1927 to 81,000 The trade unions became consider

ably more active politically In December 1928, a big strike broke out in the cigar factories of Manila and other cities Led by Evangelista, the strikers protested to the government against the prison sentences passed on the tobacco workers' trade union leaders

The growing influence of the revolutionary wing in the working class movement alarmed the reformist members of the Workers Congress leadership In May 1929, they succeeded in bringing about a split in the Congress Whereupon the progresssive trade unions established their own Union of Proletarians of more than 45 000 members At the 1st Congress of this new national trade union centre Evangelista was elected general secretary and Antonio Ora president

The Union of Proletarians led the Philippine workers' struggle for national sovereignty and their class interests Besides his major organisational jobs Evangelista found time too for the propaganda of scientific socialism In 1929, he gave three lectures on the Soviet Union to students at the Manila University

Evangelista's political work aroused the animosity of the American colonialists and their Philippine flunkeys The reactionaries went to all lengths, including venomous slander against the leaders of the working class movement in the press At the end of 1929 an attempt was made on Crisanto Evangelista s life in the province of Pangasinan where he arrived to address a peasant meeting

Following the cleavage in the Workers Congress, Evangelista and the leaders of the Workers Party intensified their political work among the peasantry This resulted in the affiliation of the National Confederation of Peasants with the Unions of Proletarians Evangelista rendered important guidance to the peasant organisations, from the Workers Party came a number of prominent leaders of the peasant movement, among them Mateo del Castillo, a close comrade of Evangelista

The rise in the national liberation movement and growing class consciousness of the workers put the question of organising a Communist Party in the Philippines on the order of the day The more militant workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals grouped around the Workers Party made up the nucleus of the future Communist Party On November 7, 1930 at a meeting held in Manila in honour of the 13th anniversary of the October Revolution the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (C P P I) was inaugurated Evangelista made a speech in which he dwelt on the world historic significance of the Russian revolution and urged the people of the Philippines and other colonial peoples to fight for their sovereignty He was elected to the Political Bureau and was made General Secretary of the Central Committee of the newly founded Communist Party

The popularity of the Communist Party grew rapidly A May Day demonstration held by the Communists in 1931 in the suburbs of Manila was joined by thousands of people In a fiery speech Evangelista called upon the Philippine people to battle with greater spirit against their oppressors The American authorities sent police and fire engines to disperse the demonstration Many persons were injured Active members and leaders of the Communist Party were arrested, among them Antonio Ora chairman of the Party and Crisanto Evangelista the Central Committee General Secretary

Both leaders of the Communist Party faced charges of 'inciting to rebellion' and awaited trial This must have appeared too lenient to the colonialists, for a few days later Antonio Ora was killed, the police version being that he died in an automobile accident on the way from one prison to another In 1931, the Communist Party was declared illegal and thirteen members of its Central Committee were put behind bars At a trial of sixteen leaders of the Communist Party in December 1933, Evangelista was sentenced to two years imprisonment and eight years exile

In the trying conditions of underground work the Philip

pine Communists bent every effort to consolidate their scattered revolutionary forces A legal Socialist Party was organised in 1933 It was headed by Pedro Abad Santos sentenced to death in 1902 by an American military court for his revolutionary work but subsequently pardoned He was president of the Philippine Society of Friends of the Soviet Union and an ardent propagandist of the great ideals of the October Revolution

The reprisals against Communist Party and trade union leaders resulted in a wave of anti American demonstrations and protests Under the pressure of the working class movement the rulers of the country were compelled to free Evangelista and his comrades in 1936 The Communist Party was again allowed to function legally

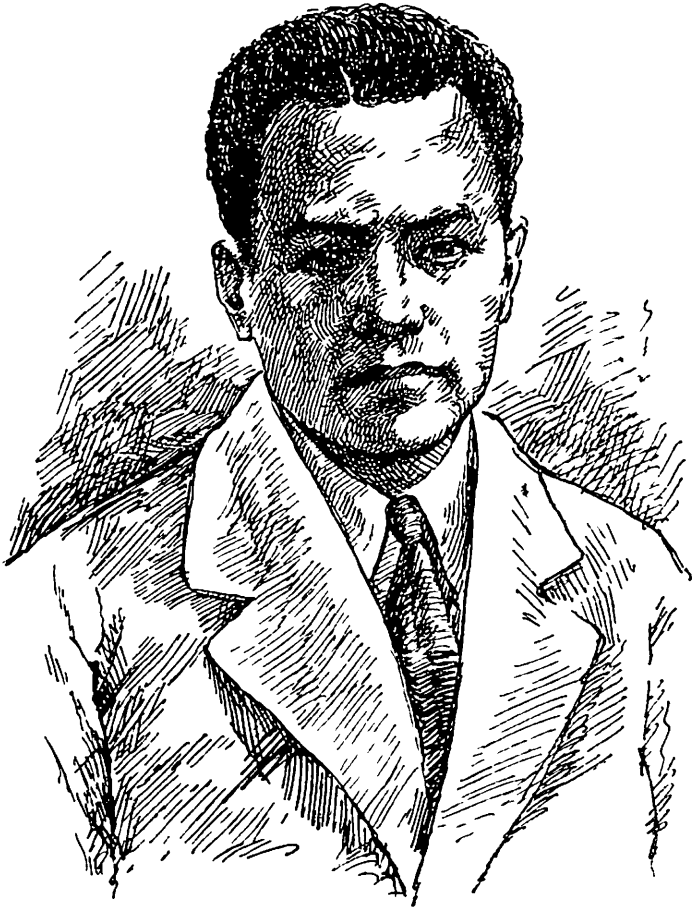
October 1938 witnessed an event of paramount importance in the working class movement of the Philippines—the merger of the Communist and Socialist Parties as one Communist Party of the Philippines Crisanto Evangelista was elected chairman of the Party Santos its vice chairman and Guillermo Capadocia General Secretary In the period from 1938 to 1941, the Communist Party strengthened its influence in a number of mass workers and peasants' organisations and also among intellectuals

During World War II, when the countries of South East Asia were threatened by Japanese aggression, Crisanto Evangelista prepared the Party for the tasks ahead As soon as the Japanese occupied the Philippines in December 1941 the leadership of the Communist Party organised resistance to the invaders, guerilla detachments were formed in many parts of the country

From the very first days of the occupation, the Japanese secret police started shadowing the leaders of the Communist Party now operating underground On January 24 1942, Japanese police spies came on the trail of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at Manila and arrested Evangelista and Santos

Knowing the respect these two revolutionaries commanded the Japanese invaders tried to induce them to collaborate with their puppet administration But no threats, promises or torture could turn these Communists into collaboration ists Crisanto Evangelista passed away in his prison cell as a result of inhuman torture Santos his comrade, was kept in confinement for over a year in conditions which so impaired his health that he died a few months after his release

The death of these two prominent leaders of the Commun ist Party was a great blow to all Philippine patriots Their comrades in arms Mariano Balgos Mateo del Castillo Cas tro Alejandrino, Juan Feleo, Vicente Lava and others now took over the leadership of the Communist Party, the National Anti Japanese United Front and the Hukbalahap guerilla army The autumn of 1944 saw the Hukbalahap emer ge as a powerful military force of many thousand armed men This people's army was in itself a noble tribute to the fighters who gave their life for the great ideals of communism and for the happiness of their people



Juan Feleo

Juan Feleo

One of the founders of the Communist Party and leader of the Philippine peasantry Juan Feleo was born on May 1, 1896, in Santa Rosa (Nueva Ecija) He came of peasant stock Like the father of Mariano Balgos Juan Feleo s father was a veteran of the national liberation revolution of 1896 From him the boy Feleo learned to love his country and his people

Juan Feleo managed to get an education and become schoolmaster in his native village where for five years he taught the peasants' children He was greatly esteemed by his fellow villagers who valued his advice and help They often asked him to settle disputes with neighbours or family quarrels and complained of the landlords lawless actions

Feleo wrote to the newspapers of the peasants' grievances and their unjust treatment at the hands of the authorities In courts of law he pleaded the cause of the landless peasants In 1917, he organised the Tenants' Union in the province of Nueva Ecija to protect the peasants against violence and abuse by the landlords and money lenders This was a new organisation less hampered by sectarian mystical

ideology and terrorist methods typical of the former peasant organisations

The National Confederation of Peasants was organised with the active participation of Feleo at a Congress of pea sant unions held in 1922 at Manila It amalgamated the pea sant organisations of nine provinces in Central and South Luzon It had a membership of 15 000 and its influence ex tended to tens of thousands of small farmers, tenants and agri cultural labourers

The National Confederation of Peasants led mass tenants' strikes, organised peasant demonstrations and submitted pe titions Through Feleo and other progressive figures it estab lished close ties with the Workers' Congress

Now a leader of the country's peasant movement Juan Feleo moved with his large family to Tondo a suburb of Manila There he ran a laundry to support his wife and eleven children

Among the initiators of the communist movement who be came his intimate friends were Antonio Ora, chairman of the Workers Party and Crisanto Evangelista, future founder of the Philippine Communist Party A follower of Marxism, active in the country s first communist groups, Juan Feleo helped to organise the Communist Party of the Philippines The Party was founded on November 7 1930, and Feleo was elected a member of the first Political Bureau of its Central Committee This was an honour testifying to his prestige among Philippine Communists

Feleo was always in the thick of the struggle waged by the peasant masses and aware of their needs He was one of the organisers of a ten thousand strong peasant demonstra tion in 1930 In answer to a call of the National Confedera tion of Peasants this demonstration arrived in Manila to per suade the Legislative Assembly to adopt a law on the pur chase of large land estates and their sale to tenants on long term credits

With characteristic zeal Feleo made the rounds of the

rural areas, organising strikes of tenants and farm labourers and campaigning for the repudiation of taxes and rentals He often addressed the peasants clarifying to them the aims of the struggle In 1930 at the close of the year he made a fiery speech to the peasants of his native village at a memorial meeting dedicated to Antonio Ora, the freedom fighter who was treacherously murdered by his jailers At this meeting Feleo was seized by the police It was his first but by far not his last arrest

After his release Feleo led a demonstration of several thousand peasants in the San Antonio area Tear gas bombs were used against the demonstrators by a squad of the constabulary Feleo and other leaders of the demonstration were jailed Feleo's friends managed to get him out on bail but when a few days later he addressed a peasant meeting in San Miguel (Bulacan Province) he again found himself behind bars, this time for good

The police kept transferring Feleo from one prison to another to prevent contacts with his comrades But wherever he was sent the peasants found him brought him food and collected money for his bail

When Feleo was confined at Malolos, the constabulary chief of the Bulacan province condescended to visit him in the prison cell "You have a wife and many children Feleo," he said have compassion on them, name the sum for which you are ready to renounce your position as leader of the peasants, and you will have it ' Feleo replied smilingly that his naming the sum would not alter matters 'You will not find such a sum in all the Philippines " he said 'for I want enough money to give each peasant a decent living "

In December 1933, Feleo was sentenced to a long prison term together with other Communist Party leaders arrested in 1931 He regained his freedom in 1937 when a general amnesty was declared and immediately flung himself again into the struggle for the peasants' rights

Feleo was accorded the honour of presiding over the 3rd

Congress of the Communist Party in 1938 at which the Com munist and Socialist Parties were organisationally fused The unification of the two parties considerably fortified the influence of the Communist Party among the peasant masses owing to the fact that the Socialist Party was made up mainly of peasants

Implementing the decisions of the Congress Feleo addres sed himself to the task of strengthening the ranks of the National Confederation of Peasants By that time the Con federation already boasted 60 000 members in some areas of Luzon its influence among the peasants was predominant

In April 1939 Feleo led the peasants of four provinces in a successful campaign against the landlords compelling them to cease the eviction of "undesirable tenants from their holdings

To check the growth of the peasant movement the land lords resolved to bring all the peasant organisations under government control This manoeuvre led to results least ex pected by the ruling circles In June 1939, the Labour Sec retary announced the organisation of a National Peasant Committee made up of representatives of forty organisations with a total membership of 300,000 peasants and farm labour ers The Labour Secretary himself was appointed chairman of this Committee A peasant conference was called on July 16, 1939 at Cabanatuan to elect an executive secretary It was attended by ten thousand delegates The head of the autono mous government arrived in person at Cabanatuan to prev ent the election of Juan Feleo But despite all the govern ment efforts Feleo was the conference s unanimous choice as executive secretary This was a striking demonstration of the broad peasant masses' trust in the Communist Party

When World War II broke out and brought the horrors of Japanese occupation to the Philippine people, Juan Feleo emerged as one of the most able organisers and leaders of the resistance movement It was his job in Hukbalahap Head quarters to direct the mass organisations of the United Na

tional Front The culture and information department he organised at Headquarters sponsored propaganda teams to keep morale high in villages and guerilla units

In the course of the fierce battles against the occupation troops the Hukbalahap liberated considerable areas in Central Luzon by the end of 1944 Early in 1945 it was possible to establish the first democratic provincial government bodies in these liberated areas Communist Party leaders became governors of several provinces among them Juan Feleo, who became governor of the province of Nueva Ecija

Following the rout of the Japanese army, Feleo handed the government over to the administration appointed by the recently returned Commonwealth government He acted in accordance with a decision of the Communist Party motivated by the desire to remove any grounds for internal strife and work along with the bourgeois party of nationalists heading the government so as to ensure the complete sovereignty of the Philippines and implementation of democratic reforms Feleo returned to the leadership of the legal peasant movement which was revived after the occupation In May 1945 all the pre war peasant organisations joined to form the National Peasants Union (NPU) which drew nearly 400 000 tillers of the soil into its ranks in the course of a year Mateo del Castillo, Feleo s long standing comrade, became President of the NPU and Feleo his deputy As a representative of the NPU Feleo was a member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Alliance—an association of patriotic organisations set up in 1945 with the participation of the Communist Party

The independence of the Philippines was proclaimed on July 4, 1946 This was surely an occasion for rejoicing by the people But before that happened the American imperialists had contrived for Roxas Liberal Party leader and satrap of the plutocracy and feudal lords to be elected president of the Philippines Backed by the United States, the Roxas government adopted a course of violence against the de

mocratic forces Its first blow came down on the powerful communist led peasant movement

It was against Central Luzon, where the influence of the National Peasants Union was especially strong and where many peasants were in the Hukbalahap guerilla detachments, that the government hurled large units of the military police in June 1946 Plunder, killings and wholesale arrests of the more militant peasants followed in the villages

To avoid an armed clash the leaders of the NPU offered the government a peaceful settlement on condition that it proceed with the implementation of democratic agrarian re forms On the instructions of the Party, Juan Feleo escorted by several policemen, left the province of Nueva Ecija on August 24, 1946 for Manila to meet the Secretary of the Interior and discuss the situation with him On the way he was kidnapped by the reaction s hired assassins and brutally murdered

The bright image of Juan Feleo fiery Communist, loyal friend of the poor peasants and talented organiser of the mas ses will live on in the hearts of the working people of the Philippines as they press their fight for the complete inde pendence of their country

* * *

The Communist Party of the Philippines has sustained grave losses in the struggle for freedom

In a long and bitter struggle for the freedom and inde pendence of the land, for the interests of the working class and the peasantry, the Communist Party of the Philippines has fostered hundreds of valiant and loyal fighters for the ideas of Marxism Leninism The glorious names of the heroes who fell in the struggle will never be forgotten by the work ing people of the Philippines now fighting for their complete independence, for the liquidation of American domination and of the sway of black reaction

Bento Gonsalves

Bento Gonsalves

he Navy Arsenal is one of Lisbon s oldest manu facturing works It is known throughout Portugal for the revo lutionary traditions of its personnel The Arsenal workers played a prominent part in the revolution of 1910 which brought about the downfall of the monarchy and raised the green and red republican flag over Portugal Afterwards they continued in the forefront of the class struggle

A shy lad of seventeen with ginger hair came to work at the Arsenal s machine shop in 1919 His name was Antonio Bento Gonsalves He proved to be a skilled turner, especially for one so young His fellow workers wondered at his cleverness and ingenuity when entirely unaided he made improvements in the machines which lightened the labour of the turners Even as a little boy this son of a poor peasant from the Tras os Montes province had shown a probing mind and longing for knowledge But his early education did not go beyond elementary school At the age of thirteen he had to apprentice himself to a turner in a small foundry shop, giving his even ings to diligent study at a vocational school Native intel ligence combined with rare singleness of purpose enabled him to become proficient at his trade in a short space of time

When he took a job at the Arsenal, he still managed to

squeeze in some hours for his education He studied mathemat ics and in a few years finished a marine school qualifying him to navigate a small steamer However the young turner had no mind to change his trade, he had become too attached to his fellow workers and involved in their problems Long active in the trade union movement, he enjoyed the trust and respect of the Arsenal workers and was made their leader and eventually the head of their trade union

In due time however Bento was conscripted and detailed to Luanda the capital of Angola, a Portuguese colony The active trade unionist in a soldier's uniform was not idle in Luanda but helped its workers organise a trade union of their own He tried to make these workers see that the Negro po pulation of Angola and the Portuguese people had a common enemy in the reactionaries and imperialists ruling at Lisbon

Hard Times

The early twenties were hard times for Portugal The revolution of 1910 had not resolved the cardinal social issues it had not given land to the peasants or improved the position of the workers or rid the land of the domination of foreign capital Economically and financially the country was going from bad to worse, its bourgeois republican governments failed to cope with the difficulties in the land and tumbled one after another Taking advantage of this political instab ility the reactionary elements in the army aligned with the landowners and big bourgeoisie engineered a coup in 1926 and established a military dictatorship

The Republican Party, the leading party at the time, had proved incapable of preventing the coup because its leaders stood aloof from the masses and relied mainly on the backing of the liberal minded officers circles In subsequent years the Republicans brought off several putsches with the help of the officers These attempts to overthrow the military dictatorship were cruelly suppressed

Progress had been made by the Portuguese working class movement during the years of the republic In the twenties the General Confederation of Labour boasted a membership of 100,000, the trade unions frequently led big strikes to better the conditions of the workers If the working class movement failed to stop the fascists when it came to a showdown, this was mainly due to the dominant role of its anarchist elem ents in diverting the proletariat from the political strug gle Suffice it to say that the slogan of the anarchist leader ship of the General Confederation of Labour in regard to the coup of 1926 was 'neutrality of the proletariat'

The influence of the very small Socialist Party of Por tugal (2 500 members in 1928) was negligible Moreover, its reformist leaders were willing to collaborate with any bour geois government

Only the Portuguese Communist Party founded in 1921, called upon the workers to combat fascism, but its voice too, was feeble in the first years of its existence the Communist Party was a small organisation headed by persons who still laboured under the influence of anarchist and petty bourgeois ideas All the same it was through the Communists that the truth about the Soviet Union, the world s first socialist country, and the ideas of Marxism Leninism reached the Portuguese workers A number of trade unions felt the impact of these ideas Among them was the Navy Arsenal Workers Union headed by Gonsalves This trade union both fought staunchly for the interests of the workers and carried on political propaganda among them In 1927 when the ques tion came up of who should be sent to the Soviet Union to attend the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, the workers nominated Bento Gonsalves as their leading delegate The trip to the Soviet Union decided the further course of Bento's life Shortly after his return to Portugal he joined the Communist Party and became secre tary of the Party nucleus at the Navy Arsenal remaining the leader of its union

Meanwhile the class struggle in Portugal was growing more acute In 1928, the ruling military clique appointed Antonio de Oliveira Salazar professor of economics and finances who had been educated by the Jesuits to the post of Minister of Finances investing him with extraordinary powers This appointment was favoured by the big landowners monopolists and ecclesiastics because Salazar was known to have pronounced the freedom of political parties a great evil was a zealous supporter of the hierarchy and promised to "stabilise finances" Having received extraordinary powers Salazar began to make good his promises with a vengeance He issued a series of emergency decrees raising taxes, lowering wages and salaries and outlawing strikes

For a True Leninist Party

The undisguised onslaught of the reactionaries on the rights of the working people was an eye opener to many workers They now realised how harmful had been the anarchist tactics of refraining from political struggle as well as the Socialists line of conciliation with the bourgeoisie The Anarchists and Socialists began rapidly losing influence It was now obvious to the forward thinking workers that the proletariat needed a militant vanguard to head its resistance against the ruling monopolies The Communist Party alone could be that vanguard provided it overcame its ideological weaknesses and completely reorganised itself on the basis of Marxist Leninist principles

It was the foremost communist workers headed by Bento Gonsalves who undertook to accomplish this After a good deal of preparatory work, they called a national convention of the Portuguese Communist Party in April 1929 which adopted a resolution to reorganise the Party and convert it into a true Leninist party Bento Gonsalves was elected General Secretary Together with his comrades he worked with might and main to set up Party nuclei and circles and

to organise the economic and political resistance of the work ing people Gonsalves was well aware that theoretical and ideological grounding of Party cadres was a reliable basis for consolidating the party organisationally and ideologic ally The newspaper *O Proletario*, edited by Bento Gonsal ves played a momentous role in the Party s propaganda work Since 1931 the newspaper *Avante!* (Forward!) has been the leading organ of the Portuguese Communist Party

A strong Party leadership group began to form round Ben to Gonsalves It was made up of Alvaro Cunchal Jose Gre gorio, Manuel Guedes Francisco Miguel Manuel Rodriguez Silva Alfredo Caldeira and Alberto Araujo

Even after Bento Gonsalves became head of the Commu nist Party he did not turn a professional revolutionary but remained as before a first class workman" at the Navy Ar senal This helped him to be in close touch with the masses Meanwhile increasing numbers of workers were breaking away from the Anarchists and siding with the Communists Intensive propaganda had to be carried on among them to help them completely shed their erroneous views Gonsalves enjoyed immense popularity The workers trusted and loved him When the police arrived at the Navy Arsenal to arrest Bento (this was in 1930) hundreds of his fellow workers closed in a ring around him and escorted him to the police station entrance Bento Gonsalves was then exiled to Ter ceira, one of the Azores Islands All the time he was there he kept in touch with the Party

On returning from exile in 1933 Gonsalves went back to his job at the Navy Arsenal machine shop But he did not remain there long Police spies watched his every step An other arrest was imminent and he was compelled to begin the life of an underground Party functionary Moreover, his Party work had expanded into a full time job demanding all his energy The Party was growing Party nuclei were springing up in many towns of the country There was a strong Party organisation in the Navy *Marineiro Vermelho* (Red

Sailor), a paper published by the Communist Party, was eagerly read by ship crews In December 1933 trade unions under communist influence numbered scores of thousands of members These unions led numerous strikes fighting for the workers interests against the offensive of the employers which had grown more fierce owing to the economic crisis of 1929 1933 Under the leadership of the Portuguese Com munist Party the Communist Youth Federation headed by Alvaro Cunchal was making good headway too On the initiative of the Communists a number of progressive organ isations were set up a Portuguese branch of the International Labour Defence the Friends of the USSR, the League of Struggle Against Fascism and War and various student as sociations

Salazar was appointed Prime Minister with dictatorial powers in 1932, and in 1933 the fascisation of the country became an accomplished fact The new "constitution" denied franchise to three quarters of the adult population Portugal was proclaimed a new state" a unitarian corporative re public" modelled on fascist Italy The Republican, Social ist and Communist Parties were outlawed The fascist Na tional Union founded by Salazar in 1930 became the only legal party in the land The entire press was subject to strin gent censorship The workers' trade unions were banned and supplanted by the so called 'national syndicates' headed by fascist hirelings Salazar restored to the church the pri vileges of which it had been deprived by the revolution of 1910, extended them and turned the church into one of the pillars of his dictatorship But the chief instruments of the Salazar dictatorship remained the armed forces and the PIDE political police (an exact replica of the Gestapo), the gendarmerie and the public order force Mass arrests began and interrogations were accompanied by brutal tor- ture A form of torture frequently practised in the PIDE

prisons (it was called "Statue ') was making prisoners stand on their feet for days on end The Tarrafal concentration camp in one of the Green Cape Islands in the Atlantic soon came to be known as a death camp

Although the heaviest blow of the new regime descended on the Communist Party its ranks did not falter The Com munists exerted heroic efforts to organise the masses against this onslaught of fascism A general strike broke out in pro test against the fascisation of the trade unions on January 18 1934 Over 60,000 workers took part in it There were pitched battles between the strikers and the forces of repression In this strike the Communists, Anarcho Syndicalists and Socialists put up a united front, their first big united action Although the strike was brutally suppressed, it proved that the working people of Portugal would never be reconciled to fascist dictatorship

Organiser of Clandestine Struggle

It was becoming increasingly difficult to carry on the struggle under the conditions of the existing regime Bento Gonsalves and his comrades accordingly took urgent steps to reorganise Party work on an underground basis They worked out a detailed system of conspiratorial rules, but did not relax their efforts to maintain close ties with the masses

"We were amazed at Bento's inexhaustible energy, re called Comrade F , a veteran of Portugal s labour movement "At dark he kept rendezvous with one of us or a group of comrades Due to constant spying it was no longer safe to appoint meetings in cafes or other public places We would therefore meet in the street For hours Bento would walk with us along Lisbon s lovely embankments along pave ments laid with coloured flagstones We would talk of Party work The conversation usually began with an exchange of news and discussion of the latest articles in the official press and new injunctions of the regime With his quick mind

Bento could pick to pieces the demagogic arguments used by government propaganda emphasising how important it was day in and out to bring home to the workers the reaction ary essence of Salazar s policies He liked to talk about books and always recommended something for his comrades to read He made frequent mention of Lenin's *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, *Two Tactics*, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* and *Left wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*

"All class conscious workers ought to read these books,' he would say

'The many articles Gonsalves wrote for *Avante!* and after 1933 for the *O Militante*, a theoretical bulletin started on his initiative, were permeated with Leninist ideas Bento wrote a great deal smoking incessantly except when short of tobacco and then he would remark with an apologetic smile 'My tobacco money went for paper

A Communist engaged in clandestine work lives frugal lv But Bento who had charge of the Party's finances was frugal to the extreme believing in the most Spartan prin ciples, especially where he himself was concerned It was only by nagging that his comrades could persuade him to buy a new pair of shoes or a suit for himself But he took to heart the needs of his comrades and was always ready to help them out of straits

On one occasion in the autumn of 1934 Bento asked his comrades' assistance in organising an underground printing plant it being no longer safe to put out the newspaper *Avante!* and other Party publications in the shop we had been renting A comrade of ours employed at the Lisbon Tram Car Board let us have the key to a small workshop in the capital's depot section We arrived on Sunday when the shop was empty to make a hand press Bento himself had designed it and assembled the parts It took us two Sundays to com plete our work after which we carried the press to a hiding place A Party member who worked as a printer brought

type, printer s ink, paper and started teaching printing to us Soon we were hard at work We put out *Avante!*, the paper *Marineiro Vermelho*, manifestoes and leaflets Manuel Guedes and other leading comrades helped us We did all the work ourselves—editing the articles, printing them and distributing our publications '

In 1935, together with other comrades of the Portuguese Communist Party, Bento Gonsalves went to Moscow to at tend the 7th Comintern Congress Addressing the delegates under the assumed name of Albino, he dwelt on the experi ence of the working class and Communists of Portugal in their struggle against the fascist dictatorship In the six years since Gonsalves rose to the leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party marked changes had taken place within the Party Its membership had grown considerably, notwith standing the savage reprisals When the 7th Comintern Con gress met there were hundreds of Portuguese Communists serving prison terms, and many had been deported to Africa All the same the Portuguese Communist Party had advanced to the forefront of the fight against fascism It had become a genuinely Marxist Leninist vanguard party of the work ing class 'The successes scored by the Communist Party in 1929 1935, despite drawbacks in organisational and polit ical work," the newspaper *Avante!* later commented, "ra-dically changed the relation of forces within the anti fascist movement By the end of that period the Communist Party had emerged as the leading force of the entire anti fascist movement " In December 1933, membership in the Commun ist led unions greatly outnumbered that of the Anarcho Syndicalist General Confederation of Labour whose ranks were thinning The Socialist Party had practically ceased to exist Strikes against the fascisation of the trade unions, lay offs and wage cuts, peasant demonstrations against the fascist agrarian policy, protest action by intellectuals against the abolition of democratic freedoms—all these were led mainly by the Communist Party

Attendance of the Comintern Congress sessions, close study of G Dimitrov s report and speeches by delegates of fraternal parties, as well as talks with them, helped the Portuguese delegation to view the experience of their own Party in a new light The fight for a People's Front called for a radical change of its tactics, for firmer rejection of the hangovers of sectarianism, and passing from the organisation of clandestine trade unions to work inside the fascist "nation al syndicates' Illegal methods had to be combined more flexibly with legal ones, with a wide educational campaign to make the masses shed their illusory hopes of the army backed bourgeois republicans overthrowing the fascist dic tatorship by means of a putsch Tangible results could be attained only by long and persistent effort, by organising a united front of all anti fascists It was with these thoughts that Bento Gonsalves returned to Portugal

Facing the Military Tribunal

The General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Par ty set about carrying these ideas into life under extraordin ary circumstances Soon on their return to Portugal, during the night of November 11, 1935, the entire Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Portugal led by Bento Gonsalves were arrested Gonsalves and his com rades were seized in the street by PIDE agents The night was dark and on the way to the police station Bento Gon salves managed to swallow the Party documents he had on his person New arrests of Communists soon followed This was the severest blow the Communist Party suffered in its entire existence

After a month and a half of solitary confinement Bento Gonsalves was packed off to Terceira Island, already familiar to him from his former imprisonment and cast into the an cient fortress of Angra do Heroismo where shortly afterwards he was brought before a military tribunal

It needed enormous personal courage and faith in the Communist cause to turn from accused to accuser when facing his fascist judges And this is what Bento Gonsalves did, as we know from his replies at the trial, which were recorded and smuggled out of the courtroom

'In respect to the charge brought against me," we read in them, 'I do not hesitate to tell you that I have been head of the Portuguese Communist Party since April 1929 and bear full responsibility for its activities "

Exposing the enemies calumny of the Communist Party Gonsalves pointed out that it was a party of the people which opposed individual terror Acknowledging the Communist Par ty's leading role in the strike of January 18, 1934, Gonsal ves stressed that the Party s objective in heading the strike was to prevent the fascisation of the trade unions

I do not deny the accusation that I was extremely act ive in the struggle,' he continued I cannot conceive of a loyal member of a party which is combating the decaying and unjust order not being extremely active in the discharge of his duties

Hoping that his words would reach the people, Gonsalves used the courtroom to propagate the views of the Communist Party which, he claimed was heir to the freedom loving re volutionary traditions of the Portuguese people

We are fighting to return to the Portuguese people all the democratic freedoms gained by their fathers between 1820 and 1910 and taken away from them by the dictator ship " he declared We are fighting for the economic sal vation of the peasants ruined by heavy taxes and the draconic laws of the dictatorship We are fighting for immediate satis faction of the vital needs of the proletariat, for betterment of the economic and social position of the middle classes, in defence of culture and the interests of all the working people And we propose to put into life our platform by form ing a united front of all anti fascist groupings "

With inexorable logic and great force of conviction Gon

salves ridiculed the charge of "instigating to breaches of public order' brought against him He showed how consis tently the Communist Party had been fighting for the inter ests of the working class and peasantry for freedom of thought and culture and for peace

Gonsalves did not stop at disproving the unfounded charges brought against him He passed to the offensive His answers were a severe indictment of Salazar s "new state Citing concrete facts he drew a gruesome picture of the out rages perpetrated by the fascist marauders in dungeons where prisoners were beaten day after day, where they went insane or died from torture He spoke of the medieval prison regime in the Angra do Heroismo fortress He flung at his judges the defiant words "It is to such breaches of public order that an end must be put if the Portuguese nation is to be saved! '

Hope and optimism rang in Gonsalves closing remarks No matter what repressions it resorts to " he said, the dictatorship is powerless to destroy the Communist Party Fascism is savagery and the masses everywhere are rising against it The will to unite is stronger than ever We wel come the first steps the Anarcho Syndicalists and Repub licans have taken jointly with the Communist Party to set up a United Proletarian Front and a People s Front against the fascist dictatorship for the national and social emanci pation of the Portuguese people The tribunal will pro nounce its verdict That is its business As for me I repeat and shall go on repeating what I believe to be as true as it is that the Earth goes round the Sun! '

Camp of Slow Death

In October 1936 Bento Gonsalves was shipped to the concentration camp at Tarrafal to serve his sentence together with hundreds of other Communists and democrats arrested in 1935 1936 Among them were the prominent Portuguese

Communists Alfredo Caldeira, Francisco Miguel Militão Ribeiro, Alberto Araujo and Sergio Vilarigues The inhuman conditions in which the prisoners lived were horrible They were plagued by tropical fever but never allowed mosquito nets and when down with the fever remained practically without medical care No one able to move about unaided was exempt from the hard labour gangs

But even in this death camp Party work went on Gonsal ves and other comrades who were well up in theory gave lec tures on Marxism Leninism Other subjects, too, were stu died Gonsalves taught higher mathematics and foreign languages (he had a good command of French, Spanish, En glish and German) By night using scraps of paper torn from cement bags, he wrote the history of the labour and commu nist movement of Portugal

Within the Party group formed by the political prison ers at Tarrafal Bento Gonsalves and his co thinkers were com pelled to carry on an ideological struggle During discussions lasting far into the night Gonsalves proved the fallacy of the sectarian views of Jose de Sousa a member of the C C Secretariat of the C P P Jose de Sousa was against working inside the fascist trade unions and generally against the line charted by the 7th Comintern Congress He was later expelled from the Party without ever acknowledging his mistakes

The ideological struggle Bento and his comrades carried on at Tarrafal helped to uproot remnants of sectarianism throughout the Party Party work attained a higher ideol ogical level Communists were now trained in habits of strict conspiracy and if arrested knew exactly how to act at inter rogations The Party branch organised in the navy by Bento Gonsalves did good work Hundreds of sailors read the *Ma-rineiro Vermelho* The *Avante!* appeared as a daily in 1937 1938 During the civil war in Spain (1936 1939) the Com munist Party urged stronger opposition to the Salazar go vernment which had converted Portugal into a supply base

for Franco and Italo German interventionists and dispatched regular units of the Portuguese army to Spain

Many Portuguese democrats fought against fascism in the ranks of the Republican Army of Spain In September 1939 the crews of three Portuguese destroyers—*Afonso de Albu querque, Bartolomeu Dias* and *Dão*—mutinied against the Salazar regime in token of solidarity with the Spanish Re public The mutiny was put down by Lisbon's coastal bat teries but had powerful repercussions

When the Second World War broke out and Portugal under cover of neutrality transported supplies to Germany and Italy the Communist Party of Portugal did its utmost to expose the anti popular policy of the Salazar government which threatened to draw Portugal into the war on the side of the fascist axis It also led the workers' fight against the drop in living standards resulting from increased war expen ditures

This period proved even more trying for the Communist Party The war in Spain emboldened the Salazarists in their anti communist propaganda To the already existing forces of repression was added the green shirted Portuguese Legion, a para military organisation The PIDE butchers took to more refined methods of turturing political prisoners, many of the prisoners were done to death in solitary confinement cells The Communist Party sustained heavy losses Hundreds of its members were arrested and scores killed Informers infiltrated its ranks

Only after the reorganisation of the Party in 1940 1941 were the police spies planted in its ranks expelled and a hard core leadership formed The Secretariat included Bento Gonsalves' comrades in arms Alvaro Cunchal Jose Grigo rio, and Manuel Guedes

The new leadership stimulated Party activities by combining illegal with legal methods Bento Gonsalves helped to carry through the Party s reorganisation from prison

Poster of the Communist Party of Portugal

Corresponding secretly with his comrades he counselled and instructed them

Bento Gonsalves did not live to see the results of the Party's reorganisation Although his sentence expired in 1940, he was still kept on in the Tarrafal hell, the police having long since been empowered by Salazar to prolong the

prison terms of the opponents of his regime And the death camp did its dirty work On September 2, 1942, Bento Gonsalves breathed his last His remains rest a short distance from the camp beside the graves of dozens of his comrades like himself victims of fascism Here the life of Alfredo Caldeira Bento's true comrade, was cut short In this camp Alberto Araujo s health was so undermined that he died shortly after his release Here died Mario Castelhano, popular leader of the Anarcho Syndicalists, who in his latter years came around to the standpoint of working class unity

The Balance Sheet of a Heroic Life

Bento Gonsalves did not live long, but he did much to advance the working class and communist movement of Portugal "To Bento Gonsalves," said *Avante!* "we owe a turn in the tide of the affairs of the Portuguese Communist Party which converted it from a group of more or less militant and more or less politically conscious Communists into an esteemed and loved political party of the working class, with a strong following among the urban and rural proletariat and progressive intellectuals "

By the example of his zealous and dedicated life and his tireless activity right up to the moment of death, Bento Gonsalves paved the way for the upsurge of the working class and communist movement which began soon after his death From 1943 on, the Party had a Central Committee to head it A strong Party machine was created which has been functioning smoothly ever since despite police buffeting *Avante!* and other Party publications have been appearing regularly since 1941 Coming out in close type on tissue paper, these militant Party organs are widely read in and out of Portugal, affording endless annoyance to the Salazar secret police and much pleasure to Portugal's democrats and patriots

Today the Portuguese Communist Party is the militant

vanguard of the anti fascist movement in Portugal It is the only political party with a clearly defined programme of uniting all democrats and patriots for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship It is a stalwart detachment of the international communist movement, firmly upholding the stand of creative Marxism Leninism

Scores of mass strikes were led by the Communist Party during the Second World War The unity of the anti fascist and democratic forces was welded together and prevented the Salazar government from drawing Portugal into war on the side of the fascist axis After the war was over, wide sections of the population actively joined in the peace move ment initiated by the Communist Party The latter rose to the defence of the freedom and sovereign rights of the peo ples of the Portuguese colonies It urged the Portuguese to resolutely oppose the dispatching of troops to the colonies The last hour of the Portuguese colonialists has struck In Angola, Mozambique, "Portuguese" Guinea and the Green Cape Islands the people have taken to arms The flames of national liberation wars are raging in all the Portuguese colonies

Although today the fascists are hounding down the Por tuguese Communist Party even more rabidly than in Bento Gonsalves day, it is growing and gaining in strength, its vigour, invincibility and the validity of its revolutionary traditions proved in struggle These undying traditions are being reinforced by the present generation of Portuguese Communists who revere the memory of the founder of their Party and are following in his footsteps

Answering the questions of the fascist judges on Ter ceira Island in 1936, Bento Gonsalves fearlessly castigated the Salazar dictatorship Álvaro Cunchal, his friend and com rade in arms, the present General Secretary of the Portu guese Communist Party, displayed the same courage in 1950 He made a brilliant speech at his trial in Lisbon beating the Salazarists on every point they brought against the Commun

ists and raising higher than ever the prestige of the Communist Party After outrageous tortures Cunchal was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment The years went by The Communist Party continued the fight In January 1960, the progressive public learned with joy that Cunchal and a group of his comrades had made a daring breakaway from the pri son at Peniche and rejoined the fighting ranks

That whipped the Salazarists into another frenzied wave of terror The leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party Pyres Jorge and Octavio Rodriguez Pato were jailed and were given the 'brutality treatment cycle" And with what result? Pyres Jorge made use of the prisoner's bench to re affirm his unshaken faith in the just cause of the Portuguese Communists and hail the heroic Communist Party of the Soviet Union as an ardent and consistent advocate of peace ful coexistence and the sacred cause of peace Octavio Rodri guez Pato, after having endured eleven months of torture flung at his fascist judges Our Communist Party represents the people You can convict me, what matters, however is not your verdict but that of the people and I face it unafraid As to you, esteemed judges, fear the people s judgement Their chastising hand will descend upon you before long "

The Communists' appeals have stirred the masses to ac tion The implementation of Gonsalves consistent policy of unity with the democratic forces explains the success of the recent strikes and demonstrations held on a scale unparalleled in the history of Portugal and deepening the crisis of the fas cist dictatorship Hundreds of thousands of working people have demonstrated in the streets of Lisbon and other cities demanding the resignation of the Salazar government and the establishment of a democratic regime in Portugal They no longer fall for the provocations of the police, but measure blow for blow And no doubt among the demonstrators pelt ing the gendarmes with stones are many workers of the Na vy Arsenal who have heard their elder comrades speak of Bento Gonsalves, fearless fighter and a most likeable man

Julian Grimau Garcia

Julian Grimau Garcia

He remained true to himself the line of the Party and the hopes of Spain He bore himself like a Communist which means— like a Man He left this life knowing that he had discharged his duty that he would be resurrected on our banners and that when his blood so cruelly shed grew cold the flame of his heroic life would continue to light up the life of his brothers

Marcos Ana Spanish communist poet

short time ago his name was known but to a few Those who worked with him and were in constant contact with him in Spain knew only his underground pseudonyms To them he represented the Central Committee of the Com munist Party and expressed its will They knew him as the organiser and leader of the day by day patient and determi ned efforts of the Spanish Communists, which erupted to the dismay of the Franco government in the form of strikes, demonstrations, leaflets and the words, painted in letters a yard high on walls and fences AMNESTY!" 'DOWN WITH FRANCO!" "LIBERTY" By these efforts the Communists of Spain sustained the people's hope that the dark night of Francoism would not cast its shadows forever on their soil

Then suddenly the name thundered through the world and thrilled the hearts of millions of people everywhere Enemies as well as friends took off their hats to the courage, the conviction of the Communist Julian Garcia Gri mau

Arrested and brutally tortured by the Franco police, but not broken in spirit, tried and shot by court martial, but immortal in the eyes of the Spanish people, whose nati onal hero he will always remain, Julian Grimau is revered as a hero by men and women throughout the world Poets have written verses in his honour and artists have immortal ised his noble features City streets and Young Pioneer de tachments bear his name In the history of the liberation struggle of the Spanish people he symbolises the courage, honour and glory of the Communists of Spain He stands in a row with such fighters against the dark forces of fascism as G Dimitrov E Thaelmann, A Gramsci, N Belojanis and other heroes of the communist movement

For years an underground Party functionary, he did not talk much about himself, being always mindful of the rules of conspiratorial work But we know that he was born in Madrid on February 18, 1911, and that his childhood differed little from that of thousands of his playmates in the working class districts of that city His father was away at his job in the Ibero American Publishing Plant from early in the morning until late at night, his mother kept house for the large family while Julian his brothers and their friends played on the waste lot, swam the shallow Manzanares, and fought with other little boys Although his parents were poor they man aged to keep hunger from the door and to send their children to school

Julian's schooling began when he was eight He was a thin and not a very robust boy, but the industry and success with which he applied himself to his studies gained him the admiration of his schoolmates His mother and father were very anxious to make an educated man of him They strained

their resources to see him through school The years sped by, and soon he held his certificate of graduation in his hand

After some training in the printer s trade he went to work at the age of fourteen at the Ibero American Publish ing Plant The beginning of his working life coincided with stormy events in Spain The Primo de Rivera dictatorship collapsed, revolution was brewing in Spain, republican sentiments were rife, especially among the youth Julian listened with pounding heart to the virulent arguments with which the streets and cheap cafes rang and avidly read the news papers He was carried away by the exploit of the captains Galan and Hernandes, who had raised the garrison in the town of Jaca against the monarchy, and who were later shot by sentence of the royal court

The Ibero American Publishing Plant was a centre of the republican parties activities, and like many of his fellow workers Grimau became a confirmed republican He was twenty when the monarch was deposed by the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses and the bourgeois democratic revolution triumphed He was with the throngs that tore the deposed monarch's flags from government buildings and exulted in the victory and the proclamation of the republic He became a member of the Republican Federal Party

Julian believed in the new born republic and like mil lions of other Spaniards set great hopes on it He welcomed its first steps, as yet unaware that the change of setting had not brought with it basic social or political changes in the life of his country, that the peasants were still break ing their backs for the landowners the workers were still hungry, and the Homeguards (gendarmerie) were still shoot ing down popular demonstrations as they had done under the monarchy He believed in the integrity and honourable intentions of the leaders of the republican parties, and did not understand why the Communist Party recently legalised maintained that the revolution was not over yet

He was angry and indignant when the reaction won the

elections of November 1933 against a background of growing fascist danger and was ready to fight, but he did not yet see what ways there were of saving the republic other than those suggested by the leaders of the republican parties The general strike of October 1934, the rising of the Asturian miners and its brutal suppression shocked him deeply When at the call of the Communist Party of Spain the movement for a People's Front got under way, he enthusiastically supported it

Early in 1936, all the democratic parties of Spain joined the People's Front, and on February 16 it scored an impressive victory in the elections to the Cortes Grimau was extremely active in the election campaign canvassing for the candidates of the People s Front among the factory and office workers This participation in the fight against fascism shaped his whole future course If until now he had looked askance at the Communists now, after fighting against fascism at their side, he realised that the Communist Party was the staunchest and most consistent champion of the republic. He began to listen more attentively to what the Communists had to say, read their central newspaper *Mundo Obrero*, and attended meetings organised by them

His outlook on things changed rapidly he shed his naive notions, and his republican ideas were modified as he became more familiar with the views of the Communists Even at that hectic time he read a great deal, although he imbibed the ideas of Marxism Leninism less from books than from life from the practical struggle against fascism All that was needed was some impulse to quicken the process of his mature development as a proletarian revolutionary

That impulse was the outbreak of a fascist insurrection on July 18, 1936, which came to a head in a fierce civil war, and then, as a result of the Italo German intervention, in the national revolutionary war of the Spanish people

Julian Grimau was among those who stormed the La Montaña soldiers' barracks and put down the fascist uprising in the capital The uprising had left the republic shorn of

both its armed forces and its guardians of public order Gri mau and hundreds of other republicans, Communists and Socialists alike, flocked to the ranks of the new republican police force set up by the people

Service in the police force required courage, stamina and level headedness, and these qualities Grimau had The situation in Madrid after the defeat of the uprising was comp licated in the extreme Thousands of fascists were hiding in the foreign embassies, subversive elements were pot-shooting at meetings and demonstrations from house tops, rockets were lighting up military targets for the fascist planes that droned in the night sky overhead Criminals who had broken out of jail during those uneasy July days were also causing the new police force endless trouble All the scum of spies and subversive agents, house breakers and pickpockets camouflaged fascists and other blackguards collected in the rear of the republic and crystallised into what came to be known as the Fifth Column, on which the insur gents and interventionists banked for support The fighting on this invisible" front was no easier or less dangerous than in the trenches of Sierra de Guadarrama or Casa del Campo Grimau worked around the clock to help clean the Fifth Co lumnists out of Madrid

When Geneial Franco s troops approached Madrid and the republic was imperilled, Grimau took the great decision to become a Communist In October 1936 the crucial days of the battle of Madrid when the caudillo's forces thundered at the gates of the city, Grimau handed in his application for membership in the Communist Party of Spain From then on he linked his life with the Party and gave all his energies to the cause for which it was battling

No sooner did the tension in Madrid abate than Grimau was sent on to the new government seat at Valencia For several months he warred with the Fifth Column in that city In the middle of 1937, he was dispatched to Barcelona to head the police criminal investigation department there He

had a direct hand in uncovering many counter revolutionary, espionage and subversive groups

Later on, when the Franco secret police arrested Grimau, one of the charges they brought against him was that of having as the head of the investigation department of the Barcelona police ordered the use of torture against arrested fascists and therefore of being implicated in the murder of scores of "innocent' people The Franco newspapers *Arriba ABC* etc , as well as the Italian reactionary sheet *Il Secolo* published falsifications that were supposed to "prove" his guilt It would be hard to imagine a more outrageous slander Who does not know of the tragic consequences the Franco insurrection had for the Spanish people? More than a million Spaniards lost their lives during the hostilities Over 200,000 anti fascists were shot or tortured to death by the caudillo's thugs after the war Hundreds of thousands of Spanish patriots landed in Franco dungeons, there to undergo the most sadistic treatment even to the present day In their appeal to the people of the world the inmates of the Oviedo prison said "Most of the prisoners bear the marks of brutal tortures on their bodies We all know only too well, what kind of tortures they have endured to be forced to kneel on the ground that is covered with peas, or rice, or gravel, to have wooden chips driven into the fingers, to be beaten with clubs, whips or wet towels (the last when they want to make sure that no marks are left of the bludgeoning), to be trampled underfoot or strung up by the hair or the arms, to have the genitals torn off—or any of the other methods of torture relished by the agents of the Franco police "

Julian Grimau, gentle and kind hearted by nature, never committed the "crimes" attributed to him, nor could a man who is a Communist commit them

His close friend, Manuel Urtado de Mendoza knew this period of Grimau s life well and said that he displayed the most humane qualities in his criminal police work Intelligent, serious and absolutely competent on the

job, his dominant trait was respect for human personality Indeed, the republican authorities are known to have treated arrested fascists with excessive leniency Of the 46,064 indicted fascists brought to trial in 1936 and 1937 in the people s courts of the republic, only 1,318 received death sentences It is also common knowledge that at the height of the war, in 1938, the government of the republic abolished the death penalty and appealed to Franco to do the same on the territory held by his troops The caudillo did not even deign to reply

Early in 1939, the situation began to look very bad for the republic In Catalonia the fascists pierced the front, Barcelona was taken With thousands of refugees and the shreds of the Catalonian army Grimau crossed into France The refugees and soldiers of the republic were met as enemies by the French authorities, who had been helping the homicidal triumvirate of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini to strangle the Spanish Republic Grimau spent several months in one of the concentration camps where they were hastily interned But the experience left him the same staunch Communist as before

At the end of 1939, he left France along with thousands of Spanish emigrants His Party assignment of working with the Communists who emigrated to Central America took him to the Dominican Republic for several months, and then, in September 1940, to Cuba

The republic had fallen and fascism was installed in Spain The brown plague was crawling over Europe But the struggle continued Grimau contributed to the newspapers put out by the Spanish emigrants and then to their radio broadcasts He travelled over Cuba, establishing contacts, arguing with the capitulators, and bolstering the hopes of those who were beginning to despair

After that Grimau was put on propaganda work by the Party leadership and made responsible for the functioning of the local Party units He made a thorough study of conspi

ratorial methods and in all respects achieved the stature of a professional Party worker

The long years in emigration had not weakened his militancy or his belief in the Spanish people and the victory of the ideas of Communism He read avidly and studied the problems of the workers and communist movement He was a very hard worker, his industry was really exceptional Up at six a m he could still be seen at his desk at three o clock the next morning Hours of rest and Sundays did not exist for him

S Carrillo General Secretary of the C P S , paid tribute to Grimau s " extraordinary capacity for work his generosity, his indifference to his own needs, his selfless devotion to the cause, his simplicity and modesty, and the complete absence of attitudinising or boasting or smugness in his make up ' Grimau never thought of his own needs but was the first to come to the help of a comrade in need That was the kind of man Julian Grimau Garcia was when he returned to France in 1947

He was very sociable by nature and when the occasion permitted could enjoy a bottle of wine with friends, play a game of billiards and manage a witty phrase, a good laugh, a practical joke at someone's expense or a hearty song He loved life in all its facets When it came to his own person though he was very modest and even somewhat reticent In Paris he met the daughter of a Socialist who had been shot by Franco s brigands But many years went by before he offered Angela, for that was her name his heart and hand They were married in 1951 and soon his wife bore him two girls They named their daughters Dolores and Carmen Grimau was cut out for family life and adored his children, but it was never his privilege to live at home for any length of time

On his return to France he buried himself in Party work His assignment from the Central Committee concerned the organisation of the guerilla movement in Spain a difficult

task that called for extreme caution and vigilance let alone persistence and resourcefulness The least slip on his part might entail enormous losses for both the guerillas and his comrades in France, where the activites of the Spanish Com munists were outlawed

In 1948, when the Communist Party of Spain radically changed its tactics abandoning guerilla warfare and focusing on the spread of a popular anti Franco movement inside Spain, Grimau was given a post in the Central Committee of the Par ty But he was very impatient to be in Spain, and pressed the Party leadership to send him home and let him do illegal work in his own country

Not that he ever felt cut off from Spain while in emigra tion Wherever his work took him, as S Carrillo put it, ' the Pyrenees were always behind Julian Grimau"

The 5th Congress of the C P S in 1954 proved a landmark in Grimau's life, for at that Congress he was elected a Central Committee member And early in 1958, his cherished dream came true and he returned to Spain as the Central Commit tee's representative in charge of the underground Party or ganisations inside his homeland This work took him to many provinces before, at last, he settled in Madrid

Grimau began his work in Spain at the time when the Communist Party had committed itself to unification of all opposition forces for the peaceful overthrow of the Franco dictatorship He did much to popularise and explain the policy of national reconciliation proclaimed by the C P S He helped to organise National Reconciliation Day in 1958 the nationwide General Strike of 1959, and the mass strike actions of April and May 1962 Several years went by in hard work, without a day s let up in his efforts to arouse and unite the forces of the nation against Franco He saw his family but rarely, most of their meetings" were by corres pondence, and even in his letters to his wife he discussed chiefly politics

Grimau hailed the heroic strike of the Asturian miners

which broke out in April 1962 and soon gained the support of workers in other provinces As he said in a letter to the Central Committee the strike of the Asturian miners had created "wonderful conditions for the struggle" in Madrid The moment is perfect for a general strike call Of course we haven't much time but the situation our duty require it We must gather our energies and do our duty, which we hold sacred " Further on he said ' People everywhere are voicing enthusiasm Our old colleagues are regaining confidence They can see that the efforts of the past few years have not been in vain after all "

Grimau directed the intensive preparations for the mass strikes in Madrid "You may be sure," he wrote the Central Committee, 'that we understand the importance of the hour and will spare no effort or energy "

After the strikes, which rocked the falangist regime and sank it deeper into crisis, the Central Committee advised Grimau to take a holiday in France As many times before, he declined He considered the situation in his country too grave, and asked the Central Committee "not to press the matter any further" Told that his wish had been favourably considered he said "I am glad that my holiday is being postponed until a more appropriate moment Nothing could suit me better The thing is not to weaken our forces in such troubled times for the world and for our homeland "

One of the reasons for his wishing to remain at his post was the Caribbean crisis Grimau worked like one posses sed mobilising the membership to explain to the masses that the aggressive policy of the United States towards Cuba har boured a mortal danger for the cause of peace and the future of Spain Madrid was inundated with leaflets urging all sec tions of the population, the officers and soldiers of the army, the security forces to pronounce their emphatic "NO!" to the American bases in Spain and wrest a declaration of neutrality from the government "No one has closed his eyes to the gra vity of the international situation and the consequences it

may have for our country," he informed the Central Committee "In my opinion (with which all the Party committees agree) we have made a big advance in rousing the people's awareness of the real threat of world war and the disastrous results such a war would have for our country We have put the struggle for peace first, and must keep it so

The Soviet Union s mediation removed the threat of nuclear war and Grimau was pleased to tell his wife in one of his letters that the Soviet Union s policy had saved the world from disaster and that popular feeling in Spain " was against the Americans and government and for the Soviet Union and Cuba" In another letter to her he said "It seems to me that while the gravity and danger of the situation have not diminished the international climate is much better now thanks to the calm restraint of the USSR '

Another reason for Grimau's reluctance to leave Spain just then was the wave of repression that followed the strikes of April and May, in the course of which the Franco secret police arrested hundreds of people Among those seized in Bilbao was the Central Committee member Ramon Ormazabal Nor was the Madrid branch spared That was also why Grimau asked the Central Committee not to press the question of a holiday for him and considered the moment inappropriate the police were tracking down all the comrades 'who have distinguished themselves in the actions of April and May and in the subsequent events", so as to weaken the Party and prevent further action To go to France now would be far from the most felicitous of steps as it would make things much harder for the Communists of Madrid

Grimau did not know that the police, aided by the provocateur Lara (who had wormed his way into the Madrid organisation), were already on his trail On the afternoon of November 8 1962, he was to have met a comrade On Raymundo Fernandes Viliaverde Street he took a bus Several police agents got in with him Grimau realised they

were after him and made a dash for the exit, but it was too late That happened at forty minutes past four in the afternoon, and in another twenty minutes Grimau found himself in the Security Police headquarters on la Puerta del Sol Square

There Grimau was told to fill out a questionnaire and make a statement Perfectly aware what was in store for him he deliberately picked up the pen and wrote I, Julian Grimau Garcia, born in Madrid to Enrico and Maria on February 18, 1911, herein declare that I am a Central Committee member of the Spanish Communist Party and am in Madrid to do my duty as a Communist " And having made that statement, he firmly refused to give any more testimony

When one of the policemen asked him, "Is that all you have to say? ' he replied, 'That is all "

He was taken down to an unventilated cellar, where he was handcuffed No," was the only answer they could wrest from him to all their questions fortified by threats In a rage the police began to beat him, aiming their blows at his head, face and stomach One of the policemen said he was a doctor and asked, "How would you rather have me beat you—as a policeman or doctor? Take my word for it, if I beat you as a doctor, it will be much worse for you!" Bleeding profusely, Grimau lost consciousness

At that the police dragged his lifeless body from the cellar to one of the rooms on the second storey Taking him for dead, they set about simulating a suicide They opened the window and threw him down into San Ricardo Street just as the news venders were assembling to collect the latest issues of their papers It was forty five minutes past six by then The police had acted so fast that they even forgot to remove the handcuffs from Julian's wrists

The possibility of his being recognised, however, made the police take Grimau to a clinic at last, and on November 9 and again November 13 he underwent very complicated surgery at the hands of Dr Teodoro Delgado, who literally

resurrected him from the grave But no sooner was his condition better than he was removed to the Yeserias Prison Hospital and placed once more at the mercy of Colonel Eimar's "socio political brigade"

The indignation aroused both inside and outside the country by that monstrous police crime was so great that the authorities had to find some excuse Right after arresting Grimau they let out the false report that he had tried to take his own life on arriving at the Security Police head quarters "Even before he was interrogated," said this official release "he jumped from the balcony into San Ricardo Street and hurt himself badly '

The Ministry of Information made haste to publish a special circular entitled Julian Grimau, or the Art of Fabricating Victimisation" which it distributed among all embassies and consulates in Madrid It pretended that Grimau had never been tortured and that the stories spread by the communist press are at total variance with the facts" The Franco press even published a photograph of a window through which Grimau allegedly jumped

Exposing that canard, S Carrillo said "Anyone who is at all acquainted with Julian Grimau, a man of frail physique but great spiritual strength and moral stamina, knows that he would never take his own life Julian Grimau was an exemplary Communist, a hero, one of those who dedicate their lives to the Party and work tirelessly for it day and night never faltering at decisive moments or looking back And all they do is done modestly without any noise or expectation of reward other than a pure conscience and the sense of having done their duty to their class, their people, and their Party " It was of characters such as Julian Grimau that the French priest who appeared as a witness in the case of Ormazabal Perikas, Ibarrola and Maria Dapena said "These heroic men and women may be likened to the first Christians " An Italian lawyer, Fausto Tarsitano, who was allowed to attend Grimau's trial, later told journalists "I saw that prison

window It is barred, and so small that only a cat could jump through it "

Meanwhile the Franco authorities did all they could to cover up the traces of their crime, especially when they saw what a worldwide storm of indignation and protest it had evoked In addition to the above falsification of the facts, they sought to appease public opinion by promising that Grimau would be tried by a civil rather than a military court

And Grimau lay, his body mangled but his spirit unbroken in the prison hospital The British doctor Aaron Rapoport who visited Madrid in March 1963 stated that Grimau's condition was extremely grave He said Grimau looked like a ghost The entire left side of his face was disfigured, there was a deep scar on his forehead the result of a blow which had in all probability also affected the brain Grimau resembled a victim of partial amnesia Due to a fracture of the bones, his arms were paralysed And that prisoner crippled and torn with pain, was again and again put through the third degree by the secret police But Grimau divulged no names, no identities, and merely repeated "My name is Julian Grimau "

It was at this time that another plot was hatched in the offices of the Franco secret police Foiled in their attempt to incriminate Grimau or punish him for his political activity, Franco and his confederates charged him with crimes against humanity during the Spanish Civil War

It took the secret police five months to prepare the trial, collect the evidence of the so called witnesses in the case and cook up all their sundry falsifications and 'proofs" of Grimau's guilt They were in a hurry, for they were afraid that the growing world protest movement might tear Grimau from their clutches

On April 18, 1963, Grimau was brought before a military tribunal on Relaj Street What followed was a parody on justice None of the "witnesses" for the prosecution were "able" to attend the proceedings Grimau, perfectly calm

and dignified throughout the trial, was told to answer only "yes" or "no" when questioned His statement that he "had not tried to commit suicide" was rudely squashed, as were his emphatic denials of the charge of using torture against the falangists arrested during the war and of being respon sible for their death

The trial was a parody on justice in more ways than one It was later revealed that by Spanish law one of the tribu nal members had no right to sit in judgment at all, as he had never received a lawyer s education But what did Franco justice care about the law where a Communist was concer ned? After attending the trial the Italian lawyer F Tarsitano called it a "tragic farce "

In his last speech in the courtroom Grimau said I have already told you that I was a Communist am a Com munist, and will die a Communist It is my deep conviction that my ideology is exactly the ideology my country needs I believe that my Party is the only Party dedicated to the in terests of the people "

In a letter to his wife dated April 12, he wrote "When the verdict is passed, I will let you know Please don't worry and try to be calm I await the verdict without fear—it could not be otherwise Our little girls need not be told any thing—they will find out in due time Let them play and be happy " Grimau knew he was to be sentenced to death, yet he tried to comfort his family and give it hope And knowing what the sentence would be even before it was pronounced he did not ask for mercy

His fortitude amazed even his defence counsel, Captain Alejandro Rebollo, who told the court that Grimau was being tried not for the imaginary crimes they wanted to pin on him, but for his political activity

The trial had drawn to a close, but not even the judges, hardened to all kinds of suffering as they were, dared to read out the verdict in Grimau's presence He was led away to the Carabanchel prison where for the first time he shared

a common cell with other prisoners His comrades tried to comfort and brace him up by predictions of a lenient verdict 'Don't indulge in illusions, I am sure to be shot," Grimau replied "My fate was settled long ago I will be Franco's latest victim But my blood will not be shed in vain It will undoubtedly deepen the isolation of the regime and hasten its downfall All I ask is that you maintain your unity be firm, continue the struggle here, and when you get out of prison that you overlook all that may divide you and put first that which unites us all—the fight to end Francoism "

In the evening he was informed that he had been sentenced to death The verdict was signed by General Garcia Valiño of Madrid Province and could be repealed only by the cabinet of ministers

The news that Grimau had been sentenced to death aroused the indignation of the whole world Everywhere people attended huge meetings and demonstrations calling for repeal of the unfair sentence Spanish embassies in other countries were besieged by throngs of outraged citizens Protest resolutions, telegrams and letters demanding a pardon inundated Franco s headquarters The caudillo was implored to heed the voice of the world public and repeal the death sentence by Queen Elisabeth of Belgium by the primate of Spain Cardinal Play, by the papal nuncio in Madrid, Deniel, by scientists and writers of worldwide renown, and even by several ministers in the Spanish cabinet

On April 19, the Soviet government sent Franco a telegram asking him to repeal the sentence and save the life of Julian Grimau It expressed the profound conviction that the widest sections of the people of all countries would gladly welcome such a humane step on the part of the Spanish government

Franco turned a deaf ear to these hundreds upon hundreds of appeals He wanted Grimau dead The execution of Grimau was calculated to intimidate the masses and check the pro

Grimau's wife Angela and their daughters Dolores and Carmen

cess of the collapse of the Franco regime by establishing a bond of crime and bloodshed between his supporters

At dawn of April 20, Julian Grimau was led out to be shot He was taken to a quarry used by the police for rifle practice Before death he bore himself with the same courage and staunchness as before the secret police and the military tribunal On reaching the site of the execution, he hurled these words at his torturers I have been a Communist for

25 years, and a Communist I die " He refused the services of the priest When a soldier moved to blindfold him, he said "Don t cover my eyes I am a Communist and have always looked death fearlessly in the face I am not afraid now The crimes ascribed to me are lies I never committed such crimes I am being killed simply because I dedicated my life to the defence of the people's interests "

The soldiers of the Wad Ros regiment detailed to put the verdict into effect were so moved by Grimau's courage that they faltered, it was the commander of the squad, a lieutenant in the Franco secret police, who fired the fatal shots The lieutenant had to empty his gun into the recumbent body on the ground before it gave up life

The world was deeply shaken by the tragedy enacted in Madrid Thousands of people moved in a mass on the foreign embassies and consular offices of Spain A sea of flowers—the last tribute of the living to the dead—filled the pavements in front of the Spanish embassies in London and Paris, Rome and Copenhagen Life came to a complete standstill for ten minutes in Italy The working people of the whole world cried out in anguish

"In this hour of grief coupled with rage, we Communists shed hot tears for our beloved and exemplary comrade, Julian Grimau, who is no more Nothing can assuage our pain at this tremendous loss, one of the many we have sustained in the course of our protracted struggle for the liberation of Spain We shall respond to this crime by establishing the most humane and democratic system in Spain which will put an end to the civil war tension and sanguinary reprisals, a system that will ensure all Spaniards irrespective of their creed or faith the right to life and freedom," said S Carril lo, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain

Grimau was killed, but Franco failed of his aims The Communists of Spain did not lose heart Dead, Julian Gri mau has become an emblem of struggle," said Dolores Ibarru ri, chairman of the C P S "He is still among us, he lives

and will continue to live in the hearts of future generations as they march victoriously to communism Julian Grimau was executed in the name of fascist law In the name of the peo ple s cause the finest representatives of Spanish youth are following and will continue to follow the Communist Party They will fight like Julian Grimau fought, like the many thousands of heroes who have given the world a model of revolutionary struggle, like the heroes who fell in the strug-gle, but fell unvanquished

The murder of Julian Grimau evoked a protest movement that spread through all of Spain Hundreds of letters and telegrams condemning the monstrous crime were addressed to the Spanish government An anti Franco demonstration was held at the University of Madrid People chanted, 'Fran co is an assassin!" during a demonstration held in Barcelona on May 2 In Seville, silent columns of demonstrators marched through the streets Grimau s memory was honoured by a minute s silence at scores of enterprises in Madrid Barcelona, Bilbao Asturias and other cities Not fear but anger gripped the working people of Spain, not panic or confusion but the determination to fight more militantly than ever before Thousands of workers peasants, professional people and in tellectuals joined the Communist Party now Two young anti fascists who were in prison at the time wrote to Gri mau s wife We were not Communists We still needed the final spur to hasten our decision to apply for membership in the Communist Party of Spain The day we were told of the tragic death of your husband, Julian, each of us felt an inner urge to take his place in the Party, which because it is a ge nuine people s organisation is being subjected to the most brutal persecution ' Even Spaniards still loyal to the Franco dictatorship could not overcome their feeling of burning shame In a letter to Angela Grimau one falangist said 'It may seem strange to you as to the government of my country that a falangist should write such a letter to you but I am sure that at this moment there are many falangists like me

who wish they could hide their shame and grief at this act "
Thousands upon thousands of Spaniards have recognised in the life and exploit of Julian Grimau a brilliant example of what the word Communist stands for and what the Communist Party exemplifies Julian Grimau has given the world a lesson in true heroism

His great example of heroism was recognised by the World Peace Council, which posthumously awarded Julian Grimau the Joliot Curie gold medal for his contribution to the cause of promoting understanding among the nations

Mustafa Suphı

Mustafa Suphi

If I am not aflame,
And you are not aflame
And we are not aflame,
Who then will chase the gloom?»

In these thoughtful lines Nazım Hikmet spoke for Turkish Communists When thousands of heroes gave their lives for the people, thousands more took their place The names of these heroes live in the hearts of the Turkish working people and of progressive men and women the world over Foremost among these dead heroes are Mustafa Suphi and his fourteen comrades who were shamefully trapped and murdered in cold blood by a band of hired assassins

Mustafa Suphi devoted his life to building up the work ing class and socialist movement of Turkey He combined the qualities of fearless fighter profound theoretician brilliant organiser gifted writer and public speaker Both his life and his death are an example of supreme heroism

* * *

Mustafa Suphi was born in 1888 in the town of Sam sun His father Ali Riza bey was a prominent govern ment official, and the boy after finishing school in

Syria, then part of the Ottoman Empire went on to the Istanbul University to read law His association with the revolutionary movement can be traced to his student days in Turkey's former capital We know this from the questionnaire he filled in with his own hand as a delegate to the 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East Little else is known of this period in Suphi s life, but it may be assumed that he belonged to one of the many secret student organisations which sprang up under the influence of the Russian Revolution of 1905

Finishing the university in 1906 Suphi went abroad to continue his education He spent two years in Paris studying sociological problems at the Sorbonne produced a thesis entitled "Status and Prospects of the Agricultural Credit Organisations in Turkey" and gave a brilliant presentation of it The thesis won high appreciation from the Congress of the Credit Organisations of France held in 1911 later it was published in part by the Agrarian Institute at Rome

During this period Turkish revolutionary emigrants adopted the French capital as the seat of their activities The executive committee of the Unity and Progress Party a bourgeois and landowners' nationalist party whose members were known as the Young Turks, had its headquarters in Paris A congress attended by delegates of parties and groups fighting against the despotic regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid met in Paris in 1907 Here, too, the Young Turks printed a number of their publications From his earliest contacts with the Young Turks Suphi was repelled by the narrowness of their views, and he began to take an interest in socialism In Paris he had wide recourse to socialist writings and made contacts with members of the Socialist Bureau of the Second International On several occasions he met Jean Jaures, that notable opponent of imperialism, colonialism and wars At a later date, when addressing the 1st Comintern Congress Suphi declared that "Jaures' comrades have not dropped the work begun by him"

During this period Suphi wrote articles, mainly on the

conditions of the workers and the trade union movement, for *Tanın*, a Turkish newspaper A study of the life and struggle of the French proletariat further shaped Suphi's socialist views

Suphi returned to Turkey and began teaching political economy at the Istanbul Higher Commercial Agricultural Institute What came to be known as the Young Turk bourgeois revolution had taken place in Turkey in 1908 in his absence It resulted in the establishment of a constitutional monarchy without delivering the country from political and economic domination by the imperialist powers or in any way improv ing the conditions of the toiling people The workers rallied to the struggle for their rights A wave of strikes involving railwaymen, tobacco workers, tanners, printers and other categories kept Istanbul in its grip for several years There were big strikes in 1911 at the factories of the Reji Franco English Tobacco Company in Istanbul and Ismir The tobac co workers struck for forty days in Istanbul and for twenty in Ismir Although the strikes did not end in victory for the workers they were indicative of the growing militancy and solidarity of the young Turkish proletariat

At this time, too, the first socialist organisations emerged in Turkey secret groups appeared in 1909 in Istanbul and Ismir A Congress of Turkish Socialists was convened in 1912 at Ismir and decided to found an Ottoman Socialist Party later affiliated with the Second International This Party put out socialist publications in Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian and Jewish established contacts with the trade unions and campaigned for Parliament winning several seats and proposing a labour legislature bill

Suphi organised a group called National Constitution Supporters in 1912 and started the publication of *Ifham* or "Enunciation' a paper whose name speaks for itself In its columns he attacked the Young Turk government for having betrayed the hopes of the working people and vehemently opposed its military ventures such as the Balkan wars causing untold sufferings to the Turkish people

A year later Suphi paid dearly for his courageous opposi tion to the government He was arrested on a trumped up charge and sentenced to fifteen years deportation in the re mote area of Sinop He fled to Russia early in 1914 crossing the Black Sea At the outbreak of the First World War he was interned and sent to Kaluga and later with thousands of Turkish prisoners of war on to the Urals Working at the Urals plants with his fellow countrymen Suphi and a group of his comrades carried on propaganda among these ignorant, downtrodden workers and peasants in army uniform, explaining the latest political developments and the reasons for the hard lot of the toiler in their own country Suphi and his comrades established contact with the underground Bolshevik organisations which supplied them with Marxist literature With assistance from the Bolsheviks, Suphi's propaganda work became more effective This work and con stant association with the Russian workers accomplished its purpose According to Suphi it was while working with the Russians in the Urals that the Turkish prisoners of war were fired with a revolutionary spirit and grasped the need for proletarian solidarity Many of these Turkish war prisoners were converted to communism

The October Revolution gave Suphi far greater scope for his political work At once he addressed himself to the task of founding a Turkish revolutionary organisation which could lead the struggle in his native land against the decayed re gime of the Sultan That end required widespread propaganda of Marxist Leninist teachings and the launching of a com munist newspaper uniting all Socialists around it In 1918, Mustafa Suphi started in Moscow the *Yeni Dunya* (New World), a Turkish newspaper which became the militant organ of all Turkish revolutionaries His founding and edit ing of this newspaper is one of Mustafa Suphi s inestimable services to the Turkish revolutionary movement

The first conference of Left wing Turkish Socialists was held in Moscow in July 1918 on the initiative of Suphi

At this conference several socialist groups united to form a single Socialist Party which subsequently became a part of the Communist Party of Turkey Suphi was elected chairman of the new party He also guided the work of the socialist so cieties of Turkish war prisoners at Astrakhan, Saratov Ka zan Samara and Ryazan

The activities of the Turkish Socialists in Russia and the propaganda work of the *Yeni Dunya* were frowned upon by the Sultan's government and in its many angry protests it demanded the deportation of Suphi and his fellow Social ists

Suphi also engrossed himself in the propaganda work launched by the Central Bureau of Communist Organisa tions of the Peoples of the East Well versed in Marxist theory, international law oriental and western philosophy and several languages Suphi was able within a short space of time to effectively organise the publication of printed matter in Eastern languages He composed leaflets wrote newspaper and magazine articles and arranged for the trans lation into Turkish of cardinal political documents as well as the works of Marx and Lenin Among these publications were the *Communist Manifesto*, a number of Lenin s works *The Appeal to All Moslem Working People of Russia and the East* and *The Appeal of the People s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR to the Workers and Peasants of Turkey* These publications many of which Suphi trans lated himself were designed to assist in the founding of a Tur kish Communist Party, the drafting of its programme and rules and the spread of Marxist propaganda among the Tur kish masses The translations were made easy and read able to ensure them a wide public in Turkey

A report by Suphi published in March 1919 summed up the results of the Central Bureau s work In one year it had brought out more than six million copies of newspapers booklets and leaflets in various oriental languages The East is the great rear and feeding trough of world imperial

ism," wrote Suphi in this report 'If the East rises and extends a hand to the socialist West imperialism will be caught in a vise and the hour of world socialism will draw near The Central Bureau sees the awakening of the peoples of the East as its prime task I therefore proclaim Long live the revolutionary unity of the oppressed peoples of the East and the socialist workers of Russia and Europe! '

Mustafa Suphi was a delegate to the 1st Congress of the Comintern Addressing the Congress he said that the Turkish workers and peasants residing in Russia had decided to unite for struggle against capitalism 'It is common know ledge " he declared that while the head of Franco British capitalism is in Europe its belly rests upon the fertile plains of Asia The most important task facing us Turkish Social ists is to uproot capitalism in the East '

The Turkish revolutionaries recognised the great influence of the October Revolution on the international working class movement As Suphi put it the very existence of the Soviet republic instilled new hope for their own emancipa tion into all oppressed nations and classes" He considered it his duty as a proletarian internationalist to safeguard the gains of the October Revolution at all costs He organised meetings and conferences of Turkish prisoners of war driving home to them the need of defending the Soviet republic and recruiting volunteers to fight the whiteguards and interven tionists Shoulder to shoulder with other nationalities the Turkish volunteers fought bravely against the foes of the Revolution Suphi also carried on effective propaganda among the Muslim Soviet population

In the summer of 1919, Suphi was attached to the Comin tern's Southern Bureau and worked largely in the Crimea spreading Marxist Leninist propaganda among the local population and Turks arriving from Istanbul and Anatolia He organised communist cells and mustered volunteer squads to defend the Soviet rep ublic He continued publication of *Yeni Dunya* in Simferopo l Mustafa Suphi s propaganda work

in the Crimea was extremely fruitful The Soviet newspaper *Zhizn Natsionalnostei* (Life of Nationalities) reported in its issue of May 25, 1919, that 100 sailors landing in Yalta from Istanbul "listened with enthusiasm to speeches by Suphi as a representative of the Bolsheviks and declared that Bolshevism was extremely popular in Turkey '

In view of the situation that had arisen in Turkey Suphi called upon Turkish Socialists Communists and patriots to invigorate the guerilla movement against the Entente interventionists Many of the Turkish Communists residing in Russia longed to return to their country and join the fighting Supplying them with Party literature Suphi helped them to reach British occupied Istanbul and cities of Anatolia held by the invaders The Communists were in the forefront of the fighters against imperialist intervention By May 1920 the Turkish Communists had several guerilla detachments operating successfully against the occupationist troops Communist propaganda among the interventionist soldiers in Istanbul was so effective that the British were compelled to withdraw one of their army units from the city and even dissolve it That the socialist movement in Turkey put up a united front of all the socialist and communist groups and organisations was in itself a notable achievement

In the Crimea Mustafa Suphi organised the Eastern International Brigade in which the local population fought bravely beside Turks Rumanians and Bulgarians against the whiteguard General Slashchev

In August 1919 when Denikin s army landed in the south of Russia Mustafa Suphi and other Turkish and Bulgarian Greek and Rumanian Communists associated with the Comintern s Southern Bureau joined the legendary 12th Army now fighting its way north A letter by Suphi found in the archives, describes at length the heroic campaign this army waged The situation was grave in the extreme "To the right were Makhno and Denikin to the left the Rumanians and the bands of Zelyony, in front Petlura and behind again

Makhno and Denikin and other dirty dogs " wrote Suphi "The fighting went on without a lull All who took part in the campaign especially the Communists fought with grit and valour ' In his letter Suphi speaks of the valiant conduct of the foreign Communists—the Comintern workers "old men and young marching rifle in hand at the side of the Red Army sharing its meagre rations always ventured where the danger was greatest'

It is worth noting that the British intelligence service had already made repeated attempts to capture and dispatch Mustafa Suphi When these failed it spread false reports of the Turkish revolutionary's death In the letter cited above Suphi requested that these reports be refuted and conveyed greetings to his comrades in Turkey After the 12th Army cut through the enemy encirclement Mustafa Suphi travelled to Moscow to resume his Comintern work

Soon developments in Turkey led Suphi to thoughts of returning to his native land The national liberation move ment of the Turkish people had spread far and wide The masses were awakening The heroic example of the people of Russia opened their eyes to the importance of casting off all forms of exploitation and oppression in their country

A number of letters from Turkey were published in *Zhizn Natsionalnostei* They spoke of growing sympathy for Soviet Russia Here in Anatolia " ran one of them interest in the movement in Russia and in the name of Comrade Lenin is clearly felt We are convinced that the Turkish workers look upon social revolution as the only way out for Turkey ' Another letter ran Everyone believes in the friendship of the new revolutionary Russia and looks to the Russian Soviet republic with fervid hope as the only champion of the Turkish people humiliated and plundered by Europe

When Mustafa Kemal s government was formed in April 1920 it set out to gain control of the guerilla detachments, assume leadership of the liberation movement and restrict the latter to the fight against the foreign interventionists

Mustafa Suphi exposed the dual and contradictory policy of the Turkish national bourgeoisie He pointed out to the Turkish workers and peasants the true goals for which they must fight Our comrades the workers peasants and soldiers who are now shedding their blood against the numerically superior forces of the European and Istanbul flunkeys will surely not be content to see the power pass back into the hands of the pashas and exploiters after this fratricidal war ends ' he wrote in the *Yeni Dunya* in July 1920 Will they agree to remain as before without rights? No! The new power must have its roots in the people, embrace the whole of life and the broad sections of the embattled working class Such a power can be won only in a resolute fight, and such power of the people alone can ensure the victory of the struggle against the oppressors We have full confidence in the militancy and organisation of the Turkish workers peasants and soldiers and that is why we say Long live the power of the Turkish workers peasants and soldiers!

At this trying moment in the life of his people Mustafa Suphi longed with all his heart to be among them He wanted to be in the thick of the fighting at their side Turkey was cut off from him however, by the armies and bands of the whiteguards the Georgian Armenian and Azerbaijan bourgeois nationalists, and he planned to make his way to his native land through Afghanistan and Iran But on reaching Turkestan he stayed on with the political department of the Turkestan Front to help establish Soviet power in Central Asia With characteristic zeal he now tackled hosts of tasks he resumed the publication of *Yeni Dunya* in Tashkent organised groups of Red Army volunteers addressed mass meetings took charge of the International Propaganda Bureau sponsored by the local Bolshevik Party Committee His trip to Turkey still hung in the air

The workers of Baku overthrew the bourgeois nationalist government on April 28 1920 and Soviet power was proclaimed in Azerbaijan Turkish volunteers also had a hand in

liberating Baku Suphi s arrival in Baku in the month of May marked a new period in the activities of this ardent revolutionary The most notable event of this period was the convening of a congress to establish a unified Turkish Com munist Party Suphi played an important part in initiating this congress and founding the Turkish Communist Party into which three groups were incorporated, the strongest being the Istanbul group organised in 1919 This group operating in trying underground conditions had led the revolutionary movement of the Turkish workers It put out publications pitted its strength against the foreign occupa tionists and directed the work of several major trade unions It is this group that became the backbone of the newly or ganised Communist Party of Turkey

At the height of the national liberation movement several communist groups were in existence at Anatolia (in Ankara Ismir, Zonguldak Eskisehir Samsun Adana, Konya Trab zon, and Erzurum) They maintained contacts with the Istanbul group as well as with Turkish Communists in Russia Suphi considered especially important the work of the Ankara group whose membership and influence grew rapidly The Ankara Communists waged a stubborn struggle against the provocational pseudo Communist Party set up by the Turkish authorities in the autumn of 1920 This so called Communist Party was a link in the chain of provocation persecution and witchhunting to which the true fighters for the people s cause in Turkey were subjected The Baku group of Turkish Communists was made up of members of the United Social ist Party founded in July 1918 at the conference of Turkish Socialists mentioned earlier in this chapter

All this goes to show what a deliberate distortion of the truth is the claim of the Turkish reactionaries that the Communist Party of Turkey was born on Russian soil This valiant Communist Party is the offspring and the flower of the working class, peasantry and the more politically con scious intellectuals of Turkey The backbone of that party

took root and developed on Turkish soil in the thick of the masses and in the crucible of the fight for the national and social emancipation of the people

And so immediately on his arrival in Baku Mustafa Suphi threw himself into the work of organising a unified Communist Party of Turkey With this end in view he began the publication of *Yeni Dunya* in Baku strengthened the links with the communist organisations of Istanbul and Anatolia and set out with his usual zeal to unmask the activities of the pseudo Communist Party advancing as he did so the slogan "Hands off the Proletarian Cause!" Count less questions and tasks now demanded prompt and unerring solutions, to clarify relations between Communists and Turkish Left wing Socialists define the attitude of revolu tionaries to the national liberation movement in Turkey and to the Kemalists, frame a programme and rules of the Party, as well as its immediate tasks, begin the publication of communist literature in the Turkish language etc During this period Mustafa Suphi s brilliant organising abilities, his patriotism and devotion to the revolution helped him to complete all this arduous ground work quickly and effec tively

The Turkish Communists had hoped to hold their first congress in their native country, but the Ankara govern ment refused to grant them a permit and the congress was convened in Baku It opened on September 10, 1920 and was attended by seventy four delegates representing fifteen communist groups functioning in Istanbul Anatolia and Baku There were as many as fifty one delegates from Istan bul and Anatolia Suphi presided over the Congress the agenda of which contained a report on the activities of the provisional Central Committee of the communist organisations a discus sion of current questions, the national and colonial problem, the peasant question the endorsement of a programme and rules of the Party and the election of a Central Committee of the newly formed Party

In a speech which deeply moved the delegates Suphi spoke of the influence of the Russian Revolution on the revolutionary movement in Turkey To the hearty cheers of the delegates, he declared that 'the establishment of a Turkish Communist Party will prove of great importance not only to Turkey but to the entire East as well" In its resolutions the Congress pointed out the need for unity in the ranks of the communist movement in order to deal a crushing blow to the foes of the people

The Congress unanimously hailed the national liberation movement in Turkey and vowed to give it every support At the same time the Turkish Communists spoke up clearly and boldly for the vital class interests of the working people 'The Turkish Communist Party," read the resolution, 'will bend its efforts to intensify the national liberation war against imperialism within the country and while backing this movement prepare the ground and lay the foundation for the establishment of rule by the working people

A manifesto entitled "To the Workers of Turkey ' was drawn up by the Congress and distributed It called for a united front of all patriots against the imperialists and exploiters

The Party platform endorsed at this Congress set forth the demands abolition of the Sultanate and the establishment of a republic universal, direct and free suffrage, implementation of agrarian reforms, it also put forward such concrete economic claims as the right to strike and sign collective agreements old age pensions unemployment relief, paid maternity leave, a weekly day off etc

After discussing the agrarian question the delegates agreed on the expediency of setting up peasants' committees in the villages to safeguard the peasants rights, establish control over the holdings, draught animals and grain supplies of the kulaks, landowners and money lenders, and distribute unlawfully accumulated wealth freely among the village toilers

This 1st Congress uniting all Turkish communist groups was the starting point of the Turkish Communist Party It elected Central and Auditing Committees Suphi was unanimously voted general chairman of the newly organised Party and Ethem Nejat, leader of the Istanbul group its General Secretary Cheers followed the reading of messages to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern Both texts were wholeheartedly endorsed by the delegates

Mustafa Suphi s titanic efforts in organising the new Party won appreciation in a special citation read at the Congress The esteem and affection in which Suphi was held by his fellow Communists are reflected in the remarks by one of the delegates We are greatly indebted to Comrade Suphi for the spread of revolutionary ideas among Turkish workers and their leaders and for their resolute spirit in the struggle " he said I should say that Mustafa Suphi means as much to us as Lenin to the Russian workers ' An outburst of applause greeted these words It was also mentioned at the Congress that the enemies of the Turkish working people were going out of their way to spread false rumours of Suphi 's death hoping in this way to dampen the fighting spirit of the workers There is reason to believe that the Turkish reactionaries who had long wished to get rid of Suphi were at that time already plotting his assassination

At the closing session of the Congress Suphi made a speech every word of which registered deeply on the audience There was a time ' he said 'when the reactionaries shouted from the house tops that Turkey had neither a working nor a peasant class Today with the stubborn resistance offered by the worker and peasant organisations in Istanbul Ismir, Konya Erzurum and Ankara it is quite clear that a class of workers and a peasant class exist in Turkey and that moreover they are a potent revolutionary force

There was a time, too " Suphi continued when it was claimed that no Communist Party could exist in Turkey

However, the communist representatives who have come here from various cities in Turkey think otherwise It is clear that workers' and peasants organisations are growing in size and strength

'In these turbulent times, when the foundations of all the exploiting classes are being shaken, it is imperative that the people shall take their destiny into their own hands The Communist Party must guide them on to the right goal It is the duty of the Communist Party to combat the enemy from without And at the same time it must fight against the internal enemies, the parasitic classes living at the people s expense Only on accomplishing these two tasks and putting an end to class distinctions can the Turkish Communist Party consider its duty fulfilled to the oppressed workers and peasants

Long live the Communist Party of Turkey!

"Long live the solidarity of the proletariat of all lands! Long live the Third International!

The resolutions adopted at the 1st Congress of the Turkish Communist Party fired the zeal of the Turkish Communists and infused new vigour into the liberation and revolutio nary struggle of the working people But as the victories of the Turkish patriots over the imperialists piled up the bourgeois and landlord government of Turkey tightened the screws on the masses and exerted every effort to divide up and strangle the workers and communist movement It fanned the flames of religious and national fanaticism

Mustafa Suphi now felt that the situation in Turkey called for his immediate return to his native land His decision to go back was partly prompted, too, by a letter from Mustafa Kemal inviting the Communists to send a delegation to the Great National Assembly and suggesting regular contacts in order "to receive tangible and material assistance" from the Turkish Communist Party At the same time, obviously fearing the growing influence of the Communist Party, Kemal wrote that "it was necessary to prevent untimely and

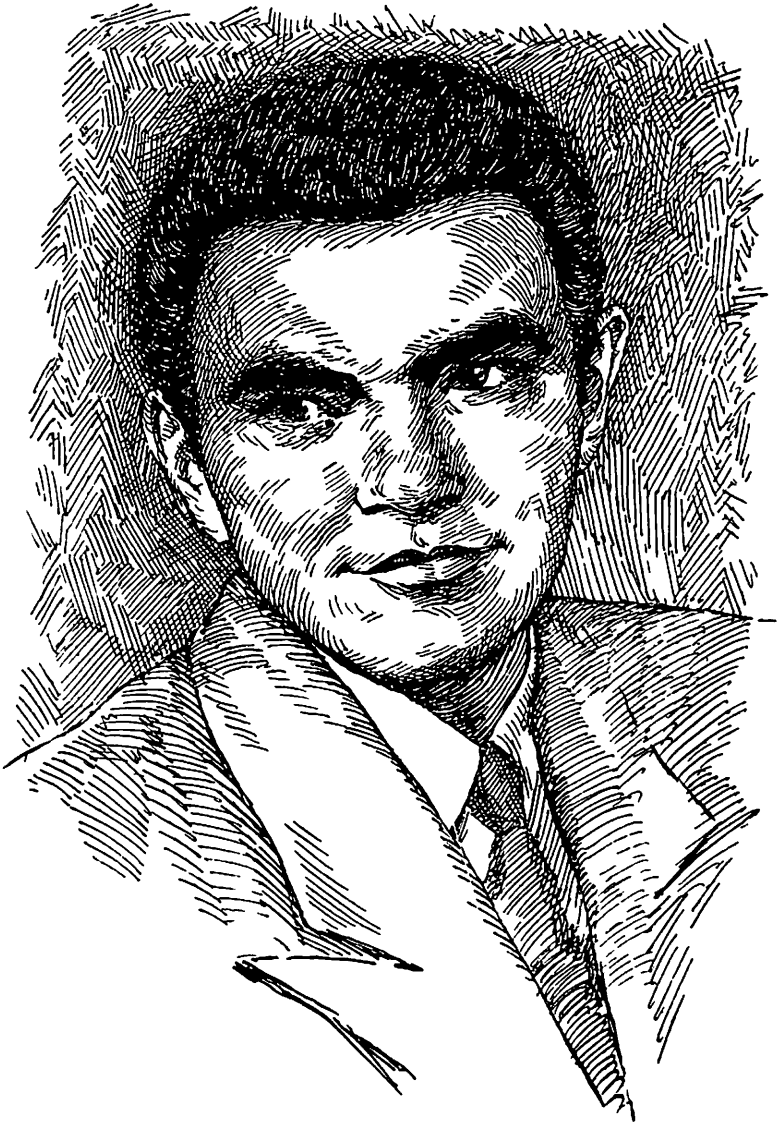
Mustafa Suphi and Ethem Nejat

needless acts liable to undermine the unity and resistance of the nation". Facts, however, left no doubt as to the true attitude to the Communists of the bourgeois and landowners Turkish government. That attitude was fiercely reactionary. Suphi knew that ordeals, persecution, possibly prison and even death awaited him in Turkey. But this could not turn the valiant revolutionary and his comrades from their purpose.

Suphi left Baku at the head of a regiment of Turkish Communist volunteers longing to take a direct part in the fight against the interventionists. However, the regiment failed to reach Turkey which was cut off from Azerbaijan by Dashnak Armenia and Menshevik Georgia. It was then that Suphi decided to go to Ankara with fourteen of his closest comrades, among whom were Hilmioglu Hakki, Ethem

Nejat, Nazmı and Ismaıl Chıtoglu members of the Central Committee of the Turkısh Communıst Party Upon learnıng that a group of Communısts were on theır way to Anatolıa the government at Ankara panıcked An order was at once dıspatched to Kazım Karabekır, Commander ın Chıef of the Army ın the Eastern Turkey, 'to prevent Suphı from reachıng Ankara and act as the sıtuatıon dictated The ımplıcatıon ın the order was not lost on thıs arrant reactıo nary All manner of obstacles now hındered the progress of the Turkısh Communısts Still Suphı and hıs comrades pressed on As soon as they arrıved ın Trebızond on the evenıng of January 28, 1921, they were dısarmed, handcuffed, beaten up and flung ınto a waıtıng motor boat The boat put out to sea and was followed by a launch bearıng hıred assassıns Mustafa Suphı and hıs comrades were stabbed wıth bayonets and cast overboard to drown Thıs was afterwards related by the saılors of the motor boat, and local dwellers saw the mutılated bodıes washed ashore by the waves

Thus ended the lıfe of an outstandıng revolutıonary a man of whom the Turkısh people may well be proud The enemıes of the revolutıon kılled Suphı but they were powerless to destroy the cause for whıch he gave hıs lıfe and the Turkısh Communıst Party whıch he had founded Thıs Party functıons and fights today As Mustafa hımself saıd "neıther prıson nor dungeons, neıther blood nor fire can stop the people s struggle and crush the natıonal lıberatıon and democratıc movements"



José Gregorio Rodriguez

José Gregorio Rodríguez

t is May 1962 Life goes on as usual in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas By night the latest model luxury cars whisk through the central streets Many of the pleasure loving gentlemen driving in them to the haunts of the city's night life belong to President Romulo Betancourt's so called 'old guard' They have been in power only a short time and are impatient to make the most of it

Things are different in the workers quarters and the squalid outskirts of Caracas, where sounds of shooting doors crumbling in and windows being broken are not rare The police often stage wholesale raids and man hunts with the aid of the gendarmes or members of the para military organisation fashioned on Hitler's storm troopers which has become the strong arm of Betancourt s party With methodical precision they go through every fifth house, every tenth flat, arresting whomever they please to suspect, and not failing to stuff their pockets with such valuables as come their way When they leave ordinary thieves finish the job It is not unusual either, for real criminals to be decked out in police uniform Of them it may be said that their new duties are nicely suited to their old habits The newspapers

never tire of reporting that Carlos Andres Perez the Venezuelan Home Minister, has literally inundated the political police with criminal elements and even given a berth in it to escaped convicts from Cuba Sometimes the papers display photographs of these bandit policemen at their foul work

In the small hours of the night, a police gang surrounds a two storey house, and one of the thugs begins to bang furiously on the door Neighbours awakened by the noise can see what ensues through the lighted windows on the ground floor of the house The police have driven the women and children into one room and planted tommy guns on them A search begins Several cut throats break into a room on the second floor Soon one of them stalks down the stairs and waves his hands, dripping blood in the face of a woman She looks more dead than alive He shouts This is what we ll do to all Communists!" An automobile drives up to the house whose occupants, children and all, are herded into it The automobile drives off in the direction of Los Chaguaramos district

Rare pedestrians keep as far as they can from a certain building in that quarter whose windows remain brightly lit all night In this building is the central office of the political police, or Dihepol (from the first letters of the name of that force, whose members are accordingly called "Dihepols") It is dangerous to venture into Los Chaguaramos even by day Anyone in the city will tell you that only recently a Dihepol ' cracked the skull of a passing student on the sheer suspicion that his victim harboured some "aggressive intent' Small wonder, then, that the street was absolutely deserted on the night of May 26 1962, when a man dropped out of a fourth storey window of the same building The time was half past one in the morning and the sole witnesses were "Dihepols" They picked up the body, dragged it to a waiting car, and drove to the Vargas Hospital The doctors who performed the autopsy stated that the man's skull

was lacerated his chest injured, and that his liver and kidneys were bleeding profusely

The following day the authorities announced over the radio and in the press that one of the leaders of the Caracas branch of the Venezuelan Communist Party, the prominent trade union leader Jose Gregorio Rodriguez, had committed suicide

To the working people of Caracas, the tall hearty Com munist with the good honest face and deliberate way of speaking was a familiar figure He was 35 years old when he died He was the father of five small children

The Venezuelan Chamber of Deputies where opposition political parties and groups were in the majority, asked the special commission for internal affairs to investigate the circumstances of the Communist leader s death The first step of the members of the commission was to seek contact with Rodriguez s wife Barbarita They were informed that she and her five children were being held by the police When finally they secured permission to see her, they were shocked to learn that she and the children had been enforced witnesses of the monstrous tortures to which Jose Gregorio had been subjected A few minutes after the poor woman was finally led away to a cell, a policeman opened the door to tell her that her husband had "jumped out of the win dow The medical expert Jesus Yerena, a member of the bourgeois Republican Democratic Union stated before the commission that "the tortures Jose Gregorio Rodriguez endured were sufficient to cause his death without the police throwing him down from a great height" His widow s ac count plus the medical findings proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the 'Dihepols" had tortured Rodriguez to death and then, to cover up the crime, had simulated suicide by throwing the body out of the window

President Romulo Betancourt s arrests and murders of political opponents are common practices in the country which is held up by propagandists of the "American way

of life" as a model of democracy for Latin America to follow In the course of three years, the Betancourt cabinet put three thousand men to death Over eight thousand political prisoners languish in prisons and concentration camps hidden away in the swampy jungles

The reign of terror reached a frenzied peak in May 1962 following the uprising in the town of Carupano Sudden arrests of Communists and other opponents of the govern ment took place all over the country Among the arrested was Jose Gregorio Rodriguez

The Peasant from the Andes

Jose Gregorio was born and grew up among the peasants of the mountainous Tachira state bordering on Colombia

Many foreigners picture Venezuela as a replica of Venice built on an ocean of oil, they also imagine that the majority of its population engages in oil extraction The word Vene zuela" does indeed mean Little Venice ' But the reason for the name was simply that the Indian tribes along the sea coast lived in houses standing on piles It is also true that oil plays a tremendous role in Venezuela s economy But in the first place, more than half of the profits of the oil industry are pocketed by foreign chiefly North American, monopolies As a result Venezuela which pours bigger divi dends into the United States than all the other Latin American republics combined, is itself an economically underdeveloped country In the second place, the oil industry gives employ ment to only two per cent of the able bodied population of the country One third of all Venezuelans, or two and a half million people, engage in agriculture, although most of them have no farms of their own and have to rent the plots they cultivate on shackling terms from the big lati fundists who hold about 80 per cent of all the private lands Jose Gregorio's parents were just such poor peasants

During his childhood, Venezuela groaned under the tyran

nical rule of the extremely rich latifundist, Vicente Gomez, who had seized power with the aid of United States warships In recompense he handed over a big slice of the oil fields to the American monopolies In 1928 there was an armed in surrection against the dictator Workers and students joined the insurgent troops Gomez routed the rebels however and threw many of them into the Rotunda, a prison with an evil reputation where they rotted for years Chains weigh ing 30 kilograms shackled the feet of the inmates of its dark dank cells And there Communist groups arose and began to work in contact with the Marxist groups that had been functioning in emigration since 1924 In 1931, the people of Caracas read the first appeal of the Venezuelan Com munist Party urging them to end the tyrant s rule

Gomez died in 1935 As soon as the news reached them the people smashed the Rotunda prison to smithereens The Communists who thus regained their liberty formed semi legal organisations In 1937, the National Conference of the Communist Party took place But the Communists were not allowed to function legally until the Second World War Venezuela's participation in the anti Hitlerite coalition and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union promoted the toilers struggle for their elementary civil rights For the first time in the country s history the Communist Party began to publish its own newspaper and enter its candidates in the presidential and congressional elections

The war led to notable changes in Venezuela's economy Oil output soared The discontinuation of many imports from other countries necessitated their home production The demand for labour grew Meanwhile the latifundists were boosting land rents, giving the excuse that prices were going up Thousands of young peasants began to leave the villages to seek work in the towns Among them was Jose Gregorio Rodriguez His first job on reaching the capital was as an errand boy in a large store With the relative democratisation

of the regime apparent at the time, the young worker was able to study and to interest himself in the strife between the different political parties He met people who helped him to see the necessity of organised struggle for the rights of the toilers

Before long however the political situation changed To the accompaniment of the cold war, the U S oil monopolies and their local placemen staged another coup d'etat in November 1948 and set up a military dictatorship

A Communist Organiser

Once again the Communist Party formed the vanguard of the fight against the dictatorship In 1950 the oil workers answered the Communist Party s call and went on strike But the international and internal political situation were not favourable to a rise in the working class movement The oil workers strike was crushed and then the military clique attacked the progressive trade unions and the Communist Party A reign of terror set in Thousands of people were sent to concentration camps, and many were killed The Communist Party although forced underground, continued its work among the masses through the trade unions set up by the government in place of those that had been destroyed It sent people not known to be Party members to work in these unions

The restrained and taciturn Jose Gregorio quickly gained the good will and respect of the workers Few had any idea that he had joined the Party unit of the store where he had worked before the establishment of the military dictator ship, its existence was kept a strict secret after the Party was banned Since in 1950 the leaders of that unit were obliged to change their place of work, the remaining Communists elected Jose their organiser, or, as they say in Venezuela, "manager of political work" Under the direction of the Caracas Party Committee, Jose Gregorio organised a legal

union of shop and warehouse workers of the Federal Region and neighbouring Miranda State and became a member of its leading council

Needless to say, under the military dictatorship the trade union could not engage in forms of struggle for the interests of its members that would wring serious concessions from the bosses Nevertheless, it did score certain victories among them a small wage rise More important was it that the Communists were able through this and similar unions, to maintain close ties with the working people and re estab lish their underground organisations in the big factories They went about it in the following way the Communists working in shops and warehouses near the factories formed groups or "blocks" as they were called, they made friends with the workers and drew the most reliable of them into their 'blocks" These same workers later became the orga nisers of the underground communist units in the factories Jose Gregorio Rodriguez contributed not a little to the success of that complicated and dangerous operation and proved a Party worker of major stature He was soon co opted to a post in the underground Party District Committee and placed in charge of political work among the masses Later he became a member of the Caracas Regional Committee headed by the prominent Communist leader Comrade Eloy Torres

It was 1957 The Communist Party had re established its organisations in the capital and a number of the states, and had recovered from its losses By this time it could point to rich experience in underground work Benefiting by the up surge in the mass movement of the industrial and white collar workers and the students the Communist Party mus tered its forces for a decisive offensive Its members contacted the other opposition parties and illegal groupings as well as some of the army commanders At its suggestion the opposi tion forces created a joint body, the Patriotic Junta, which directed the whole struggle against the military dictatorship

Not even the plentiful military supplies it received from the United States could save that dictatorship any more The general political strike of January 1958 and alliance of the military garrisons with the opposition sounded the knell of the regime that was so hateful to the people At this turbulent time Jose Gregorio Rodriguez, acting on instructions from the Patriotic Junta and Communist Party leadership, formed special teams to free political prisoners, ferret out the hangmen and cut throats formerly in the service of the dictator's police force, and make sure that they could do no more harm

By Words and by Arms

The provisional government that was soon formed was headed by Rear Admiral Wolfgang Larrazabal Strong popular resistance foiled the repeated attempts of the supporters of Perez Jimenez the deposed dictator to restore the old regime The new government recognised the civil rights won by the people The Communist Party was now able to work legally and publish its own newspapers and journals In a short time its membership increased to 35,000, the ranks of the Young Communist League also swelled At that time the Party focused particular attention on the education of its new members and attainment of trade union unity among the working people And Jose Gregorio was as usual entrusted with a very responsible phase of the work—the direction of Party propaganda in the capital

The campaign for the elections of a new president and Congress was set into motion The oil monopolies and internal reaction, sensing the futility of trying to restore the military dictatorship by force, changed their tactics and put their hopes on the candidate from the Democratic Action Party, Romulo Betancourt That sly demagogue had built up a reputation for himself as an opponent of imperialism and champion of the people's interests He played on the

popularity won by the members of his party who had remained in Venezuela and participated in the Patriotic Junta to further his own ends He pronounced himself the only person capable of averting a civil war and leading Venezuela to progress He was lavish with his election promises and painted rosy prospects of an agrarian reform and redistribution of the land to the peasants He vowed to respect the people's democratic gains create a national industry and restrain the oil monopolies' strong arm And all the while, behind the people's backs he was secretly negotiating with the oil magnates the United States government and the reactionary Christian Socialist Party

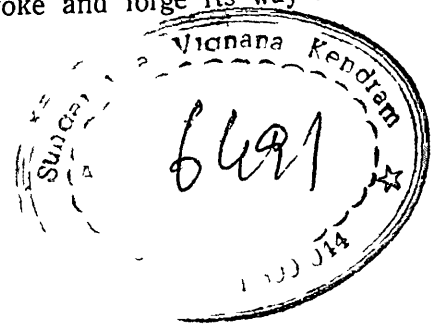
The Communist Party exposed that conspiracy and urged the people to vote for W Larrazabal known to be a sincere champion of the democratic freedoms, a man pledged to major social reforms At the presidential elections Betan court sustained a crushing defeat in Caracas but won the rural areas where the Communists did not have strong enough organisations

The further course of events fully confirmed the Commu nists' assessment Far from honouring his election promises on assuming office in February 1959, Betancourt sought to erase the people's gains In the sphere of foreign policy, he obediently did Washington's bidding and severed relations with the Cuban Republic Instead of restraining foreign capital, he made further important concessions to it The agrarian reform act passed by parliament suited only the latifundists and rural bourgeoisie, no hope of acquiring land was held out to the peasant masses and agricultural labourers Betancourt immediately suspended the Con stitution adopted early in 1959 and instigated a split in the trade union movement As a result of that anti popular course a large bourgeois party, the Republican Democratic Union, left the government coalition Betancourt s own Democratic Action Party split, too, and a good many of its members, practically all the young people affiliated with it,

went over to the opposition camp Betancourt was left with only his 'old guard' of party and trade union bureaucrats close to him personally as well as careerists itching for fat salaries in the civil service and other pickings from the public treasury The majority in parliament sided with the opposition On the other hand, Betancourt could count on the strong backing of the U S imperialists and the powers that be in the Catholic Church plus the latifundists and the big national bourgeoisie To protect himself from the people s wrath and crush their resistance, Betancourt set up a one man dictatorship rebuilt and expanded the punitive machine and outlawed the Communist Party and Revolutionary Left Movement, another progressive organisation Once again Venezuela was plunged into a blood bath

To violence the people replied with resistance that often exploded into armed struggle At the end of 1962 thousands of Venezuelans began to turn on their radios to listen to the reports and appeals of the operational command of the Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) a secret army comprising the guerilla detachments of the mountain forest districts, the "town guerillas" operating in the cities, large enterprises and rural centres and tactical combat groups active in the oil fields These patriotic groups blew up bridges and seized stores of arms and ammunition They came under a joint command and conformed to strict rules of military discipline The patriots had their own radio station and published an illegal newspaper called *Pueblo y Revolucion* (The People and the Revolution) They created permanent and temporary revolutionary tribunals and carried out their sentences Although the guerilla movement did not have a mass character, it gained the growing support of workers, students, intellectuals and peasants The Solidarity Committees that sprang up all over the country collected money, food, clothing and medicines for the guerillas and provided them with safe quarters, hiding places and means of transportation They helped the families of the

guerillas and defended the interests of those who fell into the hands of the police

The task of organising solidarity with the guerillas in Caracas was entrusted to Jose Gregorio Rodriguez In arrest ing him the Dihepol meant to extort a confession from him whatever the means and make him divulge names, addresses and secret meeting places But they forgot that they were dealing with a true Communist Jose Gregorio did not say a word, although the hangmen beat his liver and kidneys to a pulp He died like a [illegible]er on the battlefield

The Venezuelan Communist Party has repeatedly decla red its readiness to work peacefully for the restoration of the democratic freedoms in the country 'The forms of the struggle cannot be invented," the Communist Party has pointed out "They depend on a definite correlation of forces in a definite political situation Marxist Leninists decide the question of the forms of the struggle concretely, depend ing on the requirements of the given moment In present day Venezuela it is necessary to employ the most diverse forms of struggle, from armed self defence to parliamentary strife " If the reactionaries conspire with the North American mo nopolists to close all avenues to the peaceful victory of the people, the responsibility for instigating a civil war will fall entirely on their shoulders A nation that has nurtured heroes like Jose Gregorio Rodriguez will be able to cast off the foreigners' yoke and forge its way to freedom and de mocracy